

President's Corner In Conclusion

by Janet Millenson

This is my tenth and final appearance in this space, so y'all better listen up real good. Over the past two years, I've tried to encourage you to find new ways to connect with other MOS members across the state, to speak up individually and collectively on environmental issues, and to take pride in our Society's history and accomplishments. I think we're making progress toward all these aims.

Several new cross-county projects were recently unveiled. Mike Bowen's Statewide Educational Activities Committee has created an outstanding tutorial on the warblers of Maryland, which will debut as a workshop at the upcoming annual conference and then be made available to all chapters. George Radcliffe's Youth Programs Committee has launched YMOS, the youth division of MOS, whose exciting activities include an annual team birding competition. Stay tuned for lots of fun events in the future.

Meanwhile, public lands and laws that protect wildlife are under nonstop attack. The MOS Conservation Committee, chaired

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The Maryland Yellowthroat

Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society

MAY/JUNE 2006

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CONFERENCE 2006 ROCKY GAP LODGE, ALLEGANY COUNTY

The annual MOS conference will take place June 9-11 at Rocky Gap Lodge in Allegany County. You can count on the usual popular features—field trips galore plus all the trimmings: silent auction, raffle, artists' exhibit, research presentations, wine and cheese social, and a distinguished keynote speaker (Tim Gallagher of Ivory-billed Woodpecker fame). To register, download a registration form from the web site (www.mdbirds.org) or call Janet Shields at 301-416-7109.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

will take place at the annual business meeting Saturday, June 10.

The slate of MOS candidates for 2006-2007:

President: Marcia Balestri,
Frederick Bird Club

Vice President: Wayne Bell,
Talbot Bird Club

Treasurer: Emmalyn Holdridge,
Howard Bird Club

Secretary: Janet Shields,
Frederick Bird Club

Respectfully submitted,
—Helen Patton
Chair, Nominating Committee

WARBLER WORKSHOP

New this year will be the premiere of a "Warblers of Maryland" Workshop, developed by Mike Bowen, chair of the new State Education Activities Committee, with collaboration by Linda Friedland. Committee, with collaboration of Linda Friedland. This lively PowerPoint presentation (with imbedded audio files) will cover 37 species, 28 of which breed in

Maryland; the rest pass through in migration. The workshop will show multiple photos of breeding-plumaged males and females of each species, and it will include their songs. The show is meant for novice and intermediate birders, but there's probably something for everyone, and all are welcome.

THE SILENT AUCTION WANTS YOU!

Yes, it's that time of year again. Time to eye those overflowing shelves, cluttered end tables, and unread books stacked in a corner and collecting dust. Time to weed out your "stuff," toss the excess into a box, and bring it along to the Silent Auction.

Everyone ends up a winner. You reclaim much-needed space, someone else gets a great bargain, and the MOS Atlas Project makes money.

—Maryanne Dolan
Chair, Silent Auction and Raffle

PIN WINNER:

WHO KNEW SHE DREW, TOO?

The winner of the 2006 MOS Conference Pin Design Contest is none other than our multitalented and multitasking president, Janet Millenson. "Her very striking design," reports contest coordinator John Malcolm, "depicts a Turkey Vulture soaring over a mountain landscape."

John emphasizes that the judging was done "blind;" none of the dozen or so judges knew the identity of any of the artists—they just saw the images and scored them.

"Janet won fair and square," John says. "I realize it may look fishy, but it was totally on the up-and-up."

CALL FOR POSTERS

This year, as before, the MOS Research Committee will be sponsoring research presentations, all in poster format, during the Wine and Cheese Social on Saturday evening. If you have data from banding activities, hawk watches, or even small research projects, please take advantage of this opportunity to share your results with other MOS members! This event has been well attended in the past, and both conference attendees and the presenters—who are encouraged to stand near their posters to field questions—have enjoyed this chance to exchange ideas about birds.

One of this year's entries is "The Effects of Forest Fragmentation on Forest Interior Bird Species Diversity on a Coastal Watershed Landscape," presented by Christina Brinster, Amanda Spears, and Jessica White of Centreville Middle School, Centreville, Queen Anne's County. The results or current status of research projects that MOS has funded may also be presented.

If you would like to share the results of any research on the natural history of Maryland bird life, please contact me as soon as possible by e-mail at gpbrewer@comcast.net, or by phone at 301-843-3524.

—Gwen Brewer
Chair, Research Committee

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed or e-mailed to Lydia Schindler by July 25, 2006 for the September/October 2006 issue.

*Illustrations pages 1, 5, 9, and 22
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Photograph page 15 © George Jett.*

DEMYSTIFYING THE SILENT AUCTION: PART II

A couple of issues ago I described how the Silent Auction works. But there's another part of the Auction that needs explaining—those new-fangled "personal items" that popped up at last year's conference. These are hot in the fundraising world, and they were popular with MOS members. Here's how they work.

One or more members donate a service which is then bought by another member(s). The sky's the limit here, literally, as Pat Valdata proved by offering a sailplane ride over the Chesapeake. But there was plenty of excitement on the ground as well. Liz McDowell of Garrett County offered tours of her Elk Ridge NatureWorks, while Steve and Mary Huebner volunteered a night's stay at their Little Orleans Lodge. Not surprisingly, birding items were a huge hit. From owl banding with Steve Huy, Kevin Dodge, and Dave Brinker, to specialty trips with Cyndie Loeper and Bonnie Ott, MOS members outbid each other time and again. It was great fun.

We plan a repeat at this year's auction, offering several new items plus some old favorites. But given the "personal" nature of these items, we handle them a bit differently from our always popular "stuff."

First, "personal items" require a minimum bid of \$25 and are not discounted. This is an arbitrary figure on my part, but I stand firm. Your kids and spouse might place the value lower, but I hereby declare each and every member of MOS to be worth at least \$25!

Then there is timing. These items have a shelf life of one year. The seller offers three or four reasonable dates. If nothing jells, sorry. No refunds (though knowing that your donation was put to good use should offer some consolation). I know that sounds a bit harsh, but MOS members are busy people. They agree to sell a small block of time, not indenture themselves. Still, with a little flexibility on both sides, a convenient time should be within reach.

More difficult to pinpoint are the dang birds. It is simply not possible to guarantee that the winning bidder will get the full range he/she might want—whether sparrows, shorebirds, or owls. Happily, the sellers have all been very knowledgeable and to date have delivered a goodly variety—even those pesky little saw-whets—so buyers have all come away satisfied.

So there we are! The Silent Auction demystified and open for business at 11 am on June 9. Come by and visit. See what we've got, and bid, bid, bid!

—Maryanne Dolan
Chair, Raffle and Silent Auction

BIRDS, BRATS, AND BEER

Jim Green chose a perfect late-winter day to "bird, brat and beer" the winners of his Silent Auction pledge. With temperatures hovering in the high 70s, five birders joined Jim at Riley's Lock on the C&O Canal, a favorite Montgomery County meeting spot. No one was disappointed. We watched and listened as several groups of Tundra Swans passed overhead, serenading us with their haunting call. While the swans headed north, we made our way up to Hughes Hollow, another prime Montgomery County location, where, due to the unusually fine weather, we found as many birders as birds. Both were of high quality, so we whiled away a few hours chatting with friends and spotting birds. A quick side trip to the polo grounds along Hughes Road produced snipe and some beautifully plumaged Killdeer. Then it was on to Sycamore Landing Road and the Townsend's Warbler—which eluded us as well as everyone else that day. So, we called it quits and headed off to Jim's house for the promised lunch.

Jim outdid himself. The brats were straight from Wisconsin and absolutely yummy. Nancy (Jim's better half) had cole slaw and beans at the ready. With Jim popping beer bottles (ask him about his musical beer

opener), the party was off to a great start. I stuck with water, but I did manage two brats and a second helping of cole slaw.

We totaled 55 species for the day. Jim says 60+, but he was also a beer ahead. On the way out, I eyed the remaining brats, but did NOT ask for a doggie bag. Well, gee... on second thought, maybe I should have had that beer after all. A Wisconsin brat—even a leftover one—tastes mighty good.

—Maryanne Dolan

ATTENTION ALL BIDDERS: HARFORD SUPERPACKAGE

One of the silent auction's more spectacular offerings will be the "Havre de Grace Overnight Getaway Package." The Harford Bird Club has ambitiously and successfully solicited donations, including meals and lodging, plus a museum visit, books, and chocolates that are to be raffled off collectively.

Club member Carol Nemeth contributed a lavish one-night stay for two in her Victorian bed and breakfast, the Spencer Silver Mansion. Any getaway package for "The City by the Bay" would not be complete without representation from the town's many fine restaurants, and we got some of the very best. The three chef-owners of The Laurappin Grille (voted best new restaurant in 2005 by *Harford Magazine*) and St. John Gourmet donated a gift card that can be used at either of their "sister" restaurants. For those who enjoy a meal with a personal touch, there is also a complete dinner for two at the Havre de Grace Ritz Gourmet Café, a charming eatery featured on WBAL Radio's Beltway Gourmet. To satisfy your sweet tooth, Bomboy's Homemade Candy donated a certificate for two pounds of their mouth-watering chocolates. And finally, awaiting the winner of this package are two passes to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum, housing one of the finest collections of working and decorative Chesapeake Bay decoys, as well as a gift certificate from Washington Street Books, a bibliophile's paradise that features over 60,000 titles. The combined retail value of the items donated by Havre de Grace businesses for this raffle package is nearly \$300.

The support that these merchants have so generously donated to the Maryland Ornithological Society cannot be overstated. The Harford Bird Club wishes you the best of luck. Even if you don't win, we hope that you will pay a visit to Havre de Grace and its nearby birding hotspots, Swan Harbor Farm and Susquehanna State Park. While you are here, please patronize our benefactors, and tell them how much you appreciate their support of MOS.

—Dave Webb

YOUTH BIRDING UPDATE

YMOS, the Youth Division of MOS, is continuing to look for ideas. The group has its own website, found at <http://www.qacps.k12.md.us/bird/mos/youth.htm>. This site will facilitate sharing of ideas, data, and resources among groups. The site already includes a calendar of events, ideas/activities for teachers, and links to good birding sites for young birders. The site can also be accessed from the MOS main page.

The focus seems to be two-fold: involving youth groups and aiding those special youth members who clearly have an advanced interest. The former can be addressed through the website, facilitating communication among interested groups, and infusing birds into school curricula. However, there are selected individuals who need a special degree of attention. Through a youth scholarship, involvement in the MOS Conference, and linking with similar students, we can give these youth the connections to develop their skills and special interest.

Anyone interested in getting involved with our developing plans or who has a youth group that would like to get involved should contact me at radclifg@qacps.k12.md.us or check out the website, from which all information and forms can be downloaded.

—George Radcliffe
Chair, Youth Programs

President's Corner (*continued from page 1*)

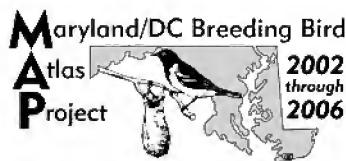
by Maureen Harvey, has responded to this challenge with tremendous dedication and well-researched advocacy. MOS has taken a stand on a variety of critical issues via the Bird Conservation Alliance and other coalitions. Individual MOS members can help by writing letters and attending hearings to show support. Even going birding can contribute to habitat conservation, because the Breeding Bird Atlas and other scientific databases we generate provide essential guidance for land-use decisions. Our actions can make a difference in saving the environment.

Since its founding in 1945, MOS has been the premier organization for anyone interested in the birds of Maryland. But although several of our smaller chapters have expanded in the past year, others have experienced a net loss. We need to take active steps to recruit and retain members, particularly in areas of the state where the population is growing fastest. For inspiration, consult the excellent list of Best Practices compiled by Membership Chair Linda Keenan. And if anyone asks why you belong to MOS, tell them "more birds, more birding, and more birders!"

Although MOS is doing well overall, I see two important goals that are still unmet. The first is to find a convenient and affordable headquarters with suitable space for an office, meetings, and storage. At our age, it's getting time to settle down in one place. The second and larger goal is to devote a serious effort to fundraising. By relying almost entirely on income from membership dues, we constrain our options and our ambitions as well. There are many generous givers out there who would be happy to donate to MOS if only we'd ask them.

Serving as President of MOS has been an extraordinary opportunity for which I am deeply grateful. I'd like to express my appreciation to all the board and committee members who volunteer their time in service of this terrific organization, which wouldn't exist without you. I especially want to thank the members of the Executive Council: Past President Paul Zucker, for being a mentor and sounding board; Secretary Janet Shields, for summoning up quick solutions to every imaginable problem; Treasurer Emy Holdridge, for her calm competence in the face of daunting demands; and Vice President Marcia Balestri, for her insight, humor, and good sense. Marcia takes over on September 1, and I know she'll do a great job.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the conference in June. Good birding to all!



NIGHT BIRDS: THE FINAL ATLAS FRONTIER

BY WALTER ELLISON

The number of reports of night birds in the current Atlas Project has been disappointing. All largely nocturnal species have fewer records in the current Atlas than in the Atlas of 1983–1987. Our two widespread large owls (Barred and Great Horned) and Chuck-will’s-widow are not too far below their totals from the 1980s, and I have real hopes of seeing them catch up in this last year of the Atlas. All other nocturnal birds, however, will require a major effort to even come close to totals achieved two decades ago. For instance, the Eastern Screech-Owl is presumably still fairly common and almost ubiquitous in Maryland and D.C., yet the current tally lags behind the 1983–1987 totals by more than 300 blocks.

I am reasonably sure that such large drops in records do reflect genuine declines in these birds, especially American Woodcock, Barn Owl, Common Nighthawk, and Whip-poor-will; all these species show strong downward population trends in eastern North America, based on both anecdote and more systematic study. Still it behooves us, as atlas workers and birders, to make every effort to validate these declines by making a strong effort to survey night birds in their element, the hours betwixt dusk and dawn.

Sue Ricciardi wrote an excellent pair of articles on how to look for owls in the *Maryland Yellowthroat* in late 2002 and early 2003; these articles are available online at <http://www.mdbirds.org/atlas/resources.html> under “Species Locators.” Enough time has passed since Sue’s articles appeared that it is time to reiterate some of her points and add some information on how to survey woodcock and nightjars. The accompanying table shows the difference in block totals between the 1983–1987 Atlas and the current project for each species, as well as general habitat preferences and responsiveness to recordings.

Most nocturnally active birds are best found from dusk to two hours after sunset, and again from around 3 a.m. to dawn. Owls, nightjars, and woodcock feed in the dead of night and are correspondingly less vocal and/or responsive during those hours. In addition, woodcock have a strong visual component to their half-light aerial displays, so dark nights with short twilight periods are poor for finding displaying birds. An exception is provided by bright moonlit nights on and around full moons, perhaps because hunting is less difficult when prey may be more easily seen. The take-home message for would-be night-birders is evident—concentrate on the first and last two to four hours of the night, except on near-full and full moon nights when you could go all night—that is, if you have the stamina. It also helps to have a partner along for the owling expedition, to scan around for silent owls and man a bright spotlight or strong flashlight.

Night birds vary in their responsiveness to recorded calls. Some owls respond vigorously, others weakly; nightjars tend to be only modestly affected, especially at a distance; and woodcock are not at all affected (it seems). There is also individual variation among the more responsive species; some owls will attack a playback speaker, some will vocalize, some will arrive silently and sit, and yet others depart quickly after seeing people.

A general pattern for using playback is to start with small owls so as not to frighten them off with a bellowing larger competitor prone to killing them on sight. Admittedly, small owls will sometimes fussily sound-off when a big-owl tape is played, but for best results start with small owls and work up to the larger species. Begin the session with a relatively long burst of a recording—from one to three minutes. Then give the birds a rest of half a minute to a full

<u>Species</u>	<u>Difference in totals</u>	<u>Habitat</u>	<u>Strength of Response</u>
American Woodcock	-230 blocks	Overgrown meadows near woods	NA
Barn Owl	-147 blocks	Abandoned structures in open land	Weak
E. Screech-Owl	-303 blocks	Moist woods with nest sites (cavities)	Strong
Great Horned Owl	-139 blocks	Mostly open land, mixed woods and fields	Weak
Barred Owl	- 94 blocks	Mature woods, often near water	Strong
Long-eared Owl	+ 1 block	Conifer stands in open country	Moderate
Short-eared Owl	+ 2 blocks	Grassland or marshes	Weak
N. Saw-whet Owl	+ 3 blocks	Conifers, esp. hemlock and spruce	Strong
Chuck-will’s-widow	- 58 blocks	Pine and mixed woods (esp. loblolly pine)	Moderate
Whip-poor-will	- 302 blocks	Open woods, often dry oak and hickory	Moderate

minute. If there is no obvious response, proceed with a short burst of the recording of 30 seconds or less, and stop to listen and look again. This process may be repeated several times, but for the sake of efficiency it is best to stop after about 10 minutes maximum.

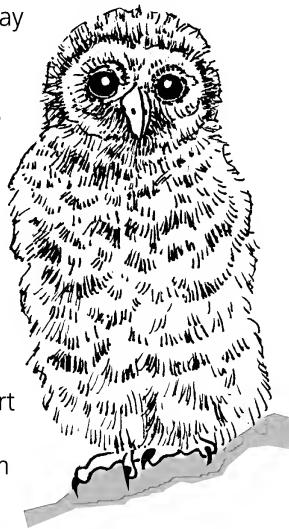
It is also not a bad idea to select habitat carefully for each species you are seeking, and try for at most two species per location. In the case of the large owls and nightjars, you will sometimes be rewarded with spontaneous calling without resorting to playback, so make sure you listen for a bit before trying a tape. Small owls may also call spontaneously, but their calls are often so soft you may not hear them unless they are quite close.

Good luck and good night-birding, everybody.

Atlas coordinator **Walter Ellison** has a master CD of night bird sounds for use in nocturnal field work. For further information about obtaining a free copy for your field work, please contact him at 23460 Clarissa Rd, Chestertown, MD 21620, or via e-mail at rossgull@baybroadband.net.

A WORD TO THE WISE

From time to time, observers may find raptor fledglings on the ground during the "brancher" period, before these youngsters can use their wings well enough to escape into the trees. It is always best to leave such birds where you find them. The young bird's parents are usually nearby, but afraid to approach a human. If you leave such birds alone, they will often survive their short time on or near the ground, because their parents feed them and protect them by mobbing any non-human predators that come along. Human rehabilitators have greater difficulty raising and preparing such birds to be successful wild predators than do their parents; there is also a danger that young birds will imprint on people if they are raised away from their kind. Similar warnings apply to other baby animals as well.



A Bumper Crop of Summer Campers

The MOS Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the selection of 13 scholarship winners from across the state. They are a cross section of science and environmental educators and volunteers who share their interest in nature with children and young people. The Committee and MOS congratulate them. We hope they will find their summer experience rewarding and, ultimately, helpful to them as they interact with young people in the years ahead. Here's a brief summary of the winners, scholarships, and the summer workshops they'll attend:

Six scholarship recipients will attend the Field Ornithology workshop on Hog Island sponsored by the Maine Audubon Society. **Amanda Koss**, an outdoor educator at the Harford Glen Environmental Education Center, won the Chandler Robbins Scholarship. **Amy Davis**, a 6th grade reading, math, and science teacher at Ridgely Middle School in Baltimore County, and **Daniel Naegeli**, a biology teacher at Edgewood High School in Harford County, each received a Helen Miller Scholarship. Doris Oakley Scholarships were awarded to **Angel Valdez**, an environmental educator for the Patterson Park Initiative at the National Audubon Society in Baltimore; **Sherry Tomlinson**, an assistant troop leader for Girl Scout Brownie troops in Howard County; and **Katharine Patterson**, a volunteer with the Irvine Nature Center in Stevenson.

Two other scholarship winners will travel to Maine Audubon workshops. **Mary Wood**, a 4th grade language arts and science teacher at the Kempton Elementary School in Frederick, received a Helen Miller Scholarship to attend the Workshop for Educators on Hog Island. **Cristin Ryan**, an 8th grade science teacher at

Sparrows Point Middle School in Baltimore, received the Frances Covington-Etta Wedge Scholarship to attend the Natural Heritage of the Maine Coast workshop.

Two recipients will experience the Wade Into Ecology workshop sponsored by the Hunt Hill Audubon Camp in Wisconsin. **Jennifer Hill**, a park ranger at Patuxent Research Refuge, won the Daniel and Helen Gibson-Dorothy Mendinhall Scholarship. **Ralph Causarano**, a 7th and 8th grade science teacher at Franklin Middle School in Baltimore County, was awarded the Eleanor Robbins Scholarship.

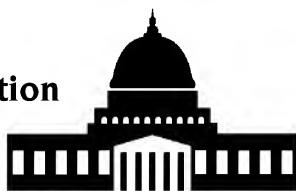
Three recipients will attend the Ecological Systems: Biomes workshop in Minnesota at the Audubon Center of the North Woods. **Veronica Cassilly**, a biology and environmental science teacher at North Harford High School, was awarded the John Wortman Memorial Scholarship; **Ronald LaCoss**, a high-school-level environmental science teacher at Landon School in Bethesda, won the Orville Crowder-Donald Messersmith Scholarship; and **Carole Keister**, a middle school science teacher at St. James Academy in Monkton, received a Helen Miller Scholarship.

MOS continues to seek qualified candidates from throughout Maryland and appreciates MOS members identifying candidates and distributing information about our scholarship program. Please refer potential candidates to the MOS web site/Education tab for more information. Our Summer 2007 selection cycle begins September 2006.

—*Tom Strikwerda
Chair, Scholarship Committee*

The Conservation Connection

By Maureen F. Harvey



Urge Legislators to Approve Open Space Funding.

Please consider contacting your MD legislators to encourage them to support full funding Program Open Space (POS), as specified in Governor Ehrlich's budget for 2007. For the past four years, more than \$269 million has been diverted from the dedicated POS fund to finance unrelated items in the general fund. Faced with tremendous pressure from the citizens of Maryland, and for the first time since his election, Governor Ehrlich has proposed fully funding POS and the other land conservation programs supported by MD's real estate transfer tax. We need to ensure that the legislature does not alter the budget proposal. It is critical that every penny of these funds go to their intended purpose of protecting our working farms, forests, and critical sensitive areas from development. An easy way to contact your lawmakers is available on the internet at <http://MdECOSystem.e-actionmax.com>. Maryland ECO System is a coalition of environmental organizations, including the Maryland Conservation Council, and MOS is an MCC member.

Resort Poses Threat to Blackwater Waters.

Dorchester Co officials are reviewing a proposal to build 3,200 homes on 1,000 acres of farmland on Egypt Road adjacent to Blackwater NWR, south of Cambridge. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation has taken the extraordinary step of launching a campaign to fight this development; they have established an on-line petition to the Governor for individuals who wish to oppose this project (<http://www.cbf.org/petition>). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff at Blackwater NWR have not opposed the project, but they have voiced serious concerns about its impact on the Little Blackwater River, which forms one boundary of the project site and drains into Blackwater NWR. The refuge is designated as a "Wetland of Special State Concern" and "Locally Significant Habitat"—and now also an Important Bird Area.

The potential environmental impacts of the project include excessive storm water runoff containing multiple pollutants; effects of construction runoff on large wetland areas; encroachment on a "Critical Area" buffer zone; and risks to endangered species, including the Delmarva fox squirrel and the American lotus. In addition, there is a danger that the increase in impervious surfaces associated with the housing project could harm water quality and fish populations, thereby affecting raptor populations at the refuge. Look for comments on this project at Blackwater's website (<http://www.fws.gov/blackwater/resortcomm.html>).

Intercounty Connector Review Period: Too Short.

In March 2006, MOS signed on to a letter penned by Greg Smith, who spearheads a coalition of groups concerned about the environmental impact of the proposed Intercounty Connector (ICC). The letter requested an extension of time to review the State Highway Administration's 15-inch-thick Environmental Impact Statement for the ICC (four CDs' worth!), from the 30 days originally proposed. *Greg would appreciate help from anyone knowledgeable about EIS review.* He may be reached via e-mail at gpsmith@igc.org.

MOS Champions Tongass National Forest.

Another threat to our federal lands has also been challenged by MOS; this one involves proposed logging of the Security or North Kuiu roadless areas of the Tongass National Forest in southeastern Alaska. In the belief that the proposal is not in the best interest of all Americans, the true owners of our national forests, MOS wrote in opposition. Our letter stated in part, "We oppose any new roads or logging in the Security or North Kuiu roadless areas of the Tongass National Forest, and we urge the Forest Service to withdraw its proposal for the Kuiu timber sale. The surrounding region has already been logged extensively, and more clearcuts would remove the best of the remaining forest and could forever change the habitat. . . . This incredible wild area is virtually the last unlogged and road-free fish and wildlife habitat in this portion of Kuiu Island, supporting nesting birds such as murrelets and auklets, Sitka black-tailed deer, moose, marten, wolves, and salmon. In addition to permanently obliterating wild roadless areas, any logging project would likely decrease local income from wildlife-related outdoor activities such as birding."

MOS Weighs in on Federal Land Management Policies.

George Alderson (Howard Co) has applied his expertise and writing skills to prepare letters for both the Howard Chapter and the MOS Conservation Committee on two major threats to our federal lands—a proposed revision to National Park Service (NPS) Management Policies and a draft report of the Task Force on Improving the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In both cases, the proposed changes would do great harm to the national interest in our federally owned lands, in part by giving more weight to local concerns and limiting opportunities for non-local citizens to participate in management decisions. MOS's letter to Mr. Bernard Fagan of the NPS Office of Policy offered the example of the restrictions on beach vehicles in Cape Hatteras National Seashore: catering to local opposition to the restrictions would overturn the protection these restrictions afford nesting Piping Plovers. MOS's letter to the NEPA Task Force stated that MOS members' interest in federal lands includes not only "lands near us, such as the Blackwater NWR" but also lands farther away, "such as the remarkable red rock canyons administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Utah. The environmental review process under NEPA gives us the

THE 2005 LIST REPORT

When I started compiling the list data for 2005, I had a sense that the year hadn't been nearly as exciting as 2004. I was forced to rethink that notion, however, as I scanned through the lists of species added to the various Maryland life lists. The year began, of course, with that wonderful **Northern Lapwing** in Frederick County that so many observers were able to see over the latter half of February. A few lucky Virginia birders, wending their way to the lapwing site, stumbled on another **Eurasian Collared-Dove**, the fourth reported in Maryland. Everything then got pretty quiet until the MOS Conference in late May, when the singing **Swainson's Warbler** discovered in Calvert County pleased many of the conference attendees. Things again quieted until Dave Czaplak's electrifying news on August 12 of a **Neotropic Cormorant** on the Potomac River! This was followed in short order by a **Swainson's Hawk** reported by Jim Stasz from Saint Mary's County on September 25, a **Curlew Sandpiper** discovered by Mark Hoffman at West Ocean City Pond on October 9, the **Gray Kingbird** discovered by the Brodericks in southern Worcester County on October 19, and the **Hammond's Flycatcher** identified by Hank Kaestner on November 24 in Baltimore County. Dave Powell reported seeing a **California Gull** in 2005, but I'm not sure where or when. The lapwing, cormorant, and Hammond's Flycatcher will all be additions to the Maryland list, if they are accepted by the MD/DC Records Committee. All in all, a pretty darned good year!

Jim Stasz (Calvert Co) maintains his hold on the top spot on the Maryland Life List, with 390 species. Will Jim be the first birder to tally 400 species in Maryland? Stay tuned! Paul O'Brien (Montgomery Co), with 389 species, stands alone in second place, while Mark Hoffman (Carroll Co) slipped to third with 388. Virginian Paul Pisano is in fourth place with a way-back count of "only" 378 species.

Fully seven birders tallied 300 or more Maryland species in 2005, with top honors going to Hans Holbrook, the brash young man from Howard County, who tracked down 312 species. He was closely followed by Jim Stasz

with 310, Bill Hubick (Baltimore Co) and Jim Brighton (Talbot Co) with 307, Matt Hafner (Harford Co) and Kevin Graff (Baltimore) with 301, and our newlywed Stan Arnold (Anne Arundel Co) with 300 species.

The coveted "300 Club"—birders with lifetime Maryland lists of 300 or more—numbers 78 among those who have reported during the past five years, up from 76 last year. The All-Time 300 Club—counting lists that date back more than five years—now includes 102 of Maryland's present and past top birders. Those adding the most new species to their MD life list this year include John Hubbell (DC), who saw 16 new species; Kevin Graff, who reports 14 new birds; and Barbara Gearhart (Frederick Co) with 12 new species.

In the **District of Columbia**, Rob Hilton (Montgomery Co) still reigns as Number One with 265 species, followed by Ottavio Janni (no longer living in the US) with 262 species and Paul Pisano with 259. Paul led the 2005 DC tally with 186 species, followed by 154 for Mike Bowen (Montgomery Co) and 143 for John Beetham (DC). Otherwise, the only change in the top ten birders is that Mike edged ahead of Byron Swift (DC), switching ninth position for eighth.

The **Maryland Yard List** tally is led by Henry Armistead (a Philadelphian but frequent sojourner on the Eastern Shore), whose Talbot County farm total of 266 species puts him well ahead of the 218-species yard list amassed by former Marylander John Gregoire in Prince George's County. Jim Stasz is coming on strong in third place, with 216 species seen from his Calvert County bayside villa. First in the work/"other" yard list category is once again Dave Webb (Harford Co), with 224 species at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, followed by Peter Osenton (Anne Arundel Co) with 210 species at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center. For 2005, the highest yard list is the 168 species tallied by Jeff Shenot (Prince George's Co), followed closely by Henry Armistead with 160 species and Rod Burley (Prince George's Co) with 139 species.

The **District of Columbia Yard List** is led by Ottavio Janni with 114 species; Byron Swift has 112. In the DC

(The 2005 List Report continues on page 8)

CONSERVATION CONNECTION *(continued)*

opportunity to participate in these decisions. . . . These (land management) decisions are of more than local importance because the lands are owned by the nation, and they yield values that touch all the citizens of this country."

2005 All Over Again: MOS Signs ABC Letter on Carbofuran.

MOS has again joined other environmental groups by signing a letter, prepared by the American Bird Conservancy, to the Environmental Protection Agency. This letter urges

the EPA to deny Louisiana's 2006 request for an emergency permit to use granular carbofuran to control rice water weevils on substantially the entire rice acreage in the state. In 2002 and in 2005, Louisiana applied for and was denied an emergency permit for the same purpose. This pesticide has been documented to have killed more than 100 different species of birds. The USFWS independently determined that there are no known conditions under which carbofuran can be used without killing migratory birds.

The 2005 List Report (continued from page 7)

work/“other” category, Norm Saunders (Montgomery Co) has tallied 89 species while wandering the parks around the US Capitol.

The **Maryland Total Tick List** is slowly growing in popularity. Some 28 folks are now reporting the sum of their MD county lists, four more than in 2004. The idea is to be able to demonstrate one’s breadth of birding experiences in Maryland by amassing county lists totaling at least 2,300, i.e., an average of at least 100 species for Maryland’s 23 counties. Jim Stasz is the first Maryland birder to break the 6,000 species mark, giving him an average of 262 species per county. Bob Ringler (Carroll Co), Marshall Iliff (California), Harvey Mudd (Montgomery Co), and Matt Hafner also averaged more than 200 species per county. For 2005 alone, top honors go to hard-driving Hans Holbrook with 3,244 species, Stan Arnold with 3,185, and Jim Brighton with 3,126.

Popularized by Jim Stasz, the **All-County Closeout List** has also been gaining in popularity as a way to measure your “MD Manic Index.” Jim leads the category, of course, having found 171 of the 234 eligible species in each of the 23 counties. In second place is Bob Ringler with 125 species, followed by Marshall Iliff with 118 and Dave Perry (Anne Arundel Co) with 102. In 2005, Stan Arnold notched the most closeouts for the year with 39—what a unique honeymoon! He and Elaine were followed by Bill Hubick with 29 closeouts and Jim Brighton with 24.

Rounding up the statewide lists is **Species Photographed in Maryland**. Jim Stasz leads with 360, followed by George Jett (Charles Co) with 340. It seems to me that Mark Hoffman should be pretty high up on this list as well, but Amy tells me that he keeps losing count. In a well-deserved third place is Arlene Ripley (Calvert Co) with 244 species photographed, followed by Paul Nistico (Charles Co) with 229 species.

On a much sadder note, we don’t know how many photographs Gary Smyle of Frederick County added to the 158 he reported in 2004. Gary passed away quite suddenly early in 2006, before he had an opportunity to send in his lists, but not before he spent almost an entire week doing what he loved best—watching and photographing the first-state-record Townsend’s Warbler and helping many visiting birders to find and enjoy the bird. Gary, we’ll sorely miss you.

Following are personal notes, highlights, and observations from 2005, more or less alphabetically presented.

Harry Armistead saw his 300th species in Dorchester County, a long-awaited feat.

Jim Brighton tells us with some glee that he broke 200 species in Caroline County (no mean feat) and added 811 new county ticks in 2005.

Walter Ellison notes that he now has 223 year-round species in his Atlas block (Hanesville SE).

Matt Hafner’s 2005 highlights include pulling even with Jim Stasz in Harford County (coming up with seven new county species to do that) and staying one species ahead of Hans Holbrook for his MD Life List.

In a neat tour de force, Rob Hilton picked up Wild Turkey and Lapland Longspur in the District of Columbia.

Aside from pulling one species closer to Matt Hafner, Hans Holbrook’s high point for 2005 was his April decision not to try for another big year.

John Hubbell insists that he now lives in DC, not Montgomery County.

George Jett’s high point of 2005 was birding with Jim Stasz and Ed Boyd. George reports that at one point Ed identified a 12-point buck as a Grasshopper Sparrow.

Hank Kaestner, in the wake of discovering the Hammond’s Flycatcher, met more Maryland birders in Baltimore County this past fall than he ever knew existed!

Ellen Lawler added a Black-billed Cuckoo to her Salisbury yard list.

Joel Martin reports that his highlights for 2005 included Mike Burchett, Jim Stasz, and a Roseate Tern, not necessarily in that order.

Paul Nistico retired and moved to Florida in 2005.

Peter Osenton added four species to his MD yard list in 2005, but he hasn’t told us anything lately about that one tree in his yard that he’s been keeping a list for.

Danny Poet’s highlight was the Snowy Owl he discovered in a tiny corner of Queen Anne’s County in the Lower Kent County CBC circle.

Don Simonson pulled off an enviable hat-trick, adding Long-eared Owl, Merlin, and Pine Siskin to his Montgomery County yard list.

Jo Solem reports that “*Selasphorus sp.*” can now be officially upgraded to Rufous Hummingbird on the Howard County Bird List, since David Holmes captured and banded said species in December of 2005.

Besides surpassing 6,000 for his Maryland Total Tick, Jim Stasz quietly slid past 300 species in his home county in 2005.

Marcia Watson-Whitmyre has officially changed her name to Marcia Watson. She has also expressed her amazement at the impact personal relationships can have on one’s county lists (she saw a lot of birds in Baltimore County in the second half of 2005 . . . grin).

Finally, Gwen Brewer reports that “some guy with a camera” keeps following her around.

I’m leaving the top county listers for you to discover on your own. The full report, with tables, is available on the MOS website. Browse to your heart’s content.

This closes the books on 2005. Thanks to all of you who shared your list totals and your experiences. Here’s to a safe and birdy 2006 for all!

—Norm Saunders
MOS List Report Compiler



This past February a group from the **Anne Arundel** chapter, led by Peter Hanan, headed north to New Jersey in search of winter birds. At the Brigantine NWR, they viewed an American Bittern sitting out in the open. Common Eiders were observed on the water, and about 25 Harlequin Ducks were close enough to pet. They saw Dunlin just about everywhere, even perched on the Barnegat jetty. At the Cape May Ferry jetty, hundreds of Purple Sandpipers patrolled the rocks, and as the group headed home, they were treated to a Mew Gull in the company of two Ring-billed Gulls.

Meanwhile, 13 members of the **Harford** Bird Club, led by Dave Ziolkowski and Les Eastman, also braved that chilly windy weekend to visit New Jersey's coastal hotspots. On their way to the Barnegat inlet, they found a near-breeding-plumaged Lapland Longspur. At the inlet, they were treated to wonderfully close views of nearly 50 Harlequin Ducks and 100 or so each of Common Eiders and Surf Scoters, as well as hundreds of calling Black Scoters and Long-tailed Ducks. Great Cormorants, Ipswich Sparrows, and Purple Sandpipers, along with Common and Red-throated Loons, were also present. They then headed to the Edwin B. Forsythe NWR to meet up with the above-mentioned Anne Arundel birders, and observed the American Bittern with them. The following day, Sunday, the two groups made the circuit of the refuge, spotting several raptors. Anne Arundel then headed to Barnegat, and Harford headed home by way of Cape May. Despite the bitter cold, they tallied 86 species and had a wonderful time.

Photographs by **Caroline** chapter's Mike Price were exhibited at an art show called Birds of the World. The event this past January, sponsored by the Caroline County Bird Club and the Caroline County Art Council, was held at the Caroline County Public Library.

Frederick County's Marcia and Bob Balestri headed south, way way south, to Antarctica. Their 17-day cruise on the ship MV Discovery took them along the pristine coastline, where they enjoyed great pelagic birding, including five species of penguin, plus close encounters with seals, and hump-backed whales.

Scott Edie's excuse for not participating in **Frederick's** Winter Count was, well, interesting. He was at Ardsley-on-Hudson near New York City, at the Eastern Regional play-downs for the National Mixed Curling competition. The what? Curling is a Scottish winter sport that involves sliding heavy polished granite stones on ice—well, it's a bit more involved than that! His team won the right to compete in the National Bonspiel (tournament) in Fairbanks, Alaska, this March. Scott, who has recently spent more time traveling for curling than for birding, spent 15 days at the CNBC studios in New Jersey, where he was part of the production team putting together the extended Olympic coverage of curling. Heading off to Fairbanks, he took his binoculars as well as his curling broom.

Nancy Everds and Peter Mann of the **Kent** County chapter headed east last October, half-way around the world to Kerala and Tamil Nadu in southern India, just in time for arriving wintering birds. They saw 203 species, including 163 life birds. Back home, Nancy's photo of a Great Blue Heron eating a minnow recently won the Grand Prize for Nature Photography at the Chestertown Arts League Photography Show. She also received an Honorable Mention for her portrait of a Changeable Hawk-Eagle taken during her trip to India.

Southern Maryland's Tyler Bell and Jane Kostenko volunteered, once again, at the American Birding Association Convention in Arizona, last July, but not before squeezing in

some pre-convention birding. They visited Aravapia Canyon where they observed a nesting Common Black-Hawk, Tyler's 700th ABA area bird. An after-dark excursion to Mount Lemmon to listen for Flammulated Owls and Whiskered Screech-Owls was initially disappointing. But finally, at one of the last stops, they heard the singing of a Whiskered Screech-Owl, just 20 feet above the car. Another nearby bird responded, as did a third owl further away. It was a wonderful way to meet Jane's 700th bird.

In **Montgomery** County, Howard Lefkowitz has added a number of useful resources to the chapter's website (<http://www.mdkinc.com/mccbird/>). It includes the chapter's upcoming events, especially trips, copies of recent newsletters, and a password-protected membership list. It also carries useful links to several rare bird listings and birding reports, as well as websites with bird-cams, and government and local organization resources. The website also features a "Swap and Sell," where members can list items for sale.

Jay Smith was elected President of the **Washington** County Chapter last spring but was not able to assume his duties until January. A cancerous tumor (multiple myeloma) pressing on his spinal cord had left him paralyzed from the mid-chest down in June. After enduring surgery, radiation therapy, and months of hospital stays and chemotherapy, in the fall he went to the U. of Maryland for a bone-marrow transplant. By early November, Jay was back home with a functioning immune system and in complete remission for cancer. Unfortunately, just before Christmas, doctors discovered that the cancer had weakened his vertebrae, leading to a neck bone injury: more surgery, then rehab. Jay is now an out-patient at Robinwood Total Rehab, feeling better than he has for a year. His goal is to be walking to some extent by Easter, and he and Pamela are planning to attend the MOS Conference in June, where they look forward to catching up with their birding buddies. They are grateful for everyone's prayers and

**MARYLAND/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE
STATUS REPORT AS OF JANUARY 16, 2006**
BY PHIL DAVIS, MD/DCRC SECRETARY

The sighting reports below have changed status since the last report was published in The Maryland Yellowthroat. This status report covers MD/DCRC review packages 095 through 097. MD/DCRC report numbers are in brackets. These records will be addressed in additional detail in a future issue of Maryland Birdlife.

MD RECORDS ACCEPTED:

- "Great White" Heron, *Ardea herodias occidentalis* [MD/2004-191]
Ocean City, Worcester County
November 13, 2004
- Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [MD/1999-211]
Patuxent River, Anne Arundel County
October 17, 1906
- Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [MD/1999-133]
Laurel, Prince George's County
March 12, 1909
- Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [MD/1999-212]
Black Water River, Dorchester County
November 17, 1920
- Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [MD/1999-135]
Patuxent River Marsh, Prince George's County
October 2, 1929
- South Polar Skua, *Stercorarius maccormicki* [MD/2003-395]
Atlantic Ocean, Worcester County
May 30, 1999
- South Polar Skua, *Stercorarius maccormicki* [MD/2003-111]
Atlantic Ocean, Worcester County
May 31, 2003
- Mew Gull, *Larus canus* [MD/2004-204]
Schoolhouse Pond, Prince George's County
December 24, 2004
- Common Murre, *Uria aalge* [MD/1997-424]
Atlantic Ocean, Worcester County
February 18, 1996
- Eurasian Collared-Dove, *Streptopelia decaocto* [MD/2003-013]
Assateague Island, Worcester County
October 13, 2002
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/1997-432]
Ocean City, Worcester County
September 12, 1963
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/2000-040]
Manchester, Carroll County
September 25, 1999-January 6, 2000
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/2000-039]
Brandywine, Prince George's County
November 21, 1999-January 1, 2000
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/2000-057]
Ijamsville, Frederick County
July 18, 2000-July 20, 2000

- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/2000-056]
Bishopville, Worcester County
November 16, 2000-January 1, 2001
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/2002-039]
Rockville, Montgomery County
October 10, 2002-October 17, 2002
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/2002-042]
Annapolis, Anne Arundel County
November 23, 2002-November 24, 2002
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/2003-004]
Welcome, Charles County
December 11, 2002-January 8, 2003
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/2003-142]
Foxville, Frederick County
August 20, 2003-January 10, 2004
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/2003-144]
Ednor, Montgomery County
October 24, 2003-December 1, 2003
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/2004-004]
White Plains, Charles County
January 10, 2004
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [MD/2004-179]
Woodbine, Carroll County
August 8, 2004

MD RECORDS ACCEPTED-FORM:

- "Black" Brant, *Branta bernicla nigricans* [MD/2004-008]
Ocean City, Worcester County
February 6, 2004

MD RECORDS ACCEPTED-GROUP:

- Aechmophorus, species, *Aechmophorus sp.* [MD/1999-205]
Assateague, Worcester County
November 1, 1999-November 6, 1999
- Aechmophorus, species, *Aechmophorus sp.* [MD/2002-001]
Grasonville, Queen Anne's County
January 12, 2002-January 13, 2002
- Selasphorus, Rufous/Allen's, *Selasphorus* [group] [MD/2000-059]
Saint Michaels, Talbot County
October 15, 2000-October 18, 2000
- Selasphorus, Rufous/Allen's, *Selasphorus* [group] [MD/2000-052]
Randallstown, Baltimore County
November 18, 2000-November 21, 2000

MD RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED:

- Ross's Gull, *Rhodostethia rosea* [MD/2000-025]
 Point Lookout State Park, Saint Mary's County
 December 16, 1999
- Eurasian Collared-Dove, *Streptopelia decaocto*
 [MD/2003-147]
 Burtonsville, Montgomery County
 December 14, 2003

DC RECORDS ACCEPTED:

- Leach's Storm-Petrel, *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*
 [DC/1998-011]
 Potomac River
 June 7, 1891
- Leach's Storm-Petrel, *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*
 [DC/1998-008]
 Hains Point
 October 4, 1930
- Leach's Storm-Petrel, *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*
 [DC/1998-012]
 Chevy Chase
 August 24, 1933
- Band-rumped Storm-Petrel, *Oceanodroma castro*
 [DC/1999-059]
 Capitol Hill
 August 30, 1893
- Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [DC/1999-210]
 Bennings
 October 13, 1900
- Yellow Rail, *Coturnicops noveboracensis* [DC/1999-134]
 National Zoological Park
 May 20, 1917
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [DC/2003-139]
 Glover Park
 November 13, 2003-January 27, 2004
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [DC/2003-138]
 Glover Park
 November 13, 2003-December 11, 2003
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [DC/2003-140]
 Smithsonian Institution
 November 29, 2003-January 3, 2004
- Rufous Hummingbird, *Selasphorus rufus* [DC/2004-195]
 Smithsonian Institution
 December 16, 2004-February 8, 2005

DC RECORDS ACCEPTED-GROUP:

- Selasphorus*, Rufous/Allen's, *Selasphorus* [group]
 [DC/2000-063]
 Dalecarlia Reservoir
 November 14, 1995-December 27, 1995
- Selasphorus*, Rufous/Allen's, *Selasphorus* [group]
 [DC/2005-015]
 Smithsonian Institution
 December 9, 2003-January 30, 2004

Identifying North America's Hummingbirds

Maybe I'm a typical Maryland birder: For a long time I never tried to learn much about hummingbirds. After all, we just have the Ruby-throated here, with the occasional stray Rufous/Allen's (and last year's Calliope in Laurel) serving to reinforce my longstanding prejudice that these little beasts are just too difficult to ID. Eventually, though, as I traveled in the Southwest, I came to realize that some 16 or 17 species (out of the world's 300-plus) occur regularly in the United States and that I was faced with the need for serious identification help. For many years I had to rely on the relatively sparse information in the "tried and true" North American field guides, and my hummingbird ID skills did not advance much. The situation has now greatly improved—the last four years have seen the entry into the marketplace of several field guides dedicated to hummingbirds (see page 24) as well as specialized DVDs.

Hummingbirds of North America (2 DVDs). Peregrine Video Productions. Produced by John Vanderpoel, written by Sheri Williamson, and narrated by Jon Dunn. 2004. Runs approximately 3 hours. \$39.95 (Also available as VHS video for \$34.95, but this version not reviewed.)

Hooked on Hummingbirds (single DVD). Avian Video Center. Produced and narrated by Thomas H. Kaminski. 2003. Runs 53 minutes. \$22.95

DVD technology has not yet fully realized its potential to revolutionize the way bird identification can be taught—that is, to meld video, stills, stop-action, split-screen shots, avian sounds, computergraphics, and the spoken word in such a way as to make the learning process effective yet relatively painless. The PVP *Hummingbirds of North America* DVD takes us many steps closer to that desirable condition. This is, in effect, a video-enhanced version of Sheri Williamson's book; it has all the pluses of her book without the disadvantage of its rather small photographs, and it capitalizes beautifully on the technologies available to the contemporary DVD producer. The video shots of hummers (24 species, fewer than in the book, but no matter) are just sensational, and stop-action and split screens are used extremely effectively to show feather shape and pattern and to compare them in different species or in different sexes/ages of the same species. The graphics illustrating ranges and the progression of migrations are useful and informative, in addition to being technically impressive.

A minor annoyance is the narration by Jon Dunn. Dunn is a terrific field guide leader, but he is not a born screen personality. He is much less wooden here than in PVP's two gull videos, but he still looks uncomfortable on-screen and sounds a tad monotonous off-screen. As Jon's is the only human voice you hear for the whole three hours, you will inevitably tire of it. On the fabulous *Watching Warblers* and *Watching Sparrows* videos, Michael Male

MINUTES OF THE MOS BOARD MEETING

DECEMBER 3, 2005

President: Janet Millenson
Vice-President: Marcia Balestri
Treasurer: Emmalyn Holdridge
Secretary: Janet Shields
Past President: Paul Zucker

Atlas: Jane Coskren
Bird Conservation Alliance:
 Paul Zucker
Conference: Janet Shields
Conservation: Maureen Harvey
Investments: Martha Waugh
Mailing List: Helen Horrocks
Membership: Linda Keenan
Scholarship: Tom Strikwerda
Youth Programs: George Radcliffe

Allegany: *not represented*
Anne Arundel: Linda Baker,
 Sharon Bradford, Tom Bradford
Baltimore: *not represented*
Caroline: *not represented*
Carroll: Maureen Harvey,
 Bob Ringler
Cecil: Marcia Watson
Frederick: Helen Horrocks
Harford: Thomas Congersky,
 Randy Robertson
Howard: Mary-Jo Betts,
 Jane Coskren, Karen Darcy,
 Jeff Friedhoffer, Tom Strikwerda,
 Kate Tufts, Martha Waugh
Kent: Walter Ellison, Nancy Martin
Montgomery: Rick Sussman
Patuxent: Fred Fallon,
 Linda Keenan
Talbot: George Radcliffe
Tri-County: *not represented*
Washington: Shirley Ford,
 Anna Hutzell

President Janet Millenson called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. and thanked the Harford Bird Club for hosting the meeting at Harford Glen in Bel Air.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Emmalyn Holdridge's quarterly Treasurer's Report was distributed to the Board. Of the \$400 received from the Wilson Ornithological Conference, it

was decided to give \$250 to support Chan Robbins' retirement reception on 12/9/05 at Patuxent Research Center. Emmalyn reminded committee chairs that it is time to submit their budgets to their Executive Council advisor. This should be done by January 4.

President's Remarks: It's been a very busy month in terms of conservation issues. Maureen Harvey will fill in the board during her report. There was a \$25 donation via PayPal on the website from a nonmember. This shows that there are many untapped sources for donations, which is why Janet is still looking for a person to head the Development Committee. The new membership brochures are not back from the printer. Janet Millenson and Linda Keenan, Membership chair, revised the brochure to make it easy to join any chapter, and it lists membership dues for each.

CHAPTER REPORTS

- **Anne Arundel:** Linda Baker reports that they recently lost Helen Ford, a member who had been active for many years on both the chapter and board levels. She was MOS Board Secretary for 18 years. As a tribute to Helen Ford, the Board voted to name an existing, unnamed MOS scholarship the Helen Ford Memorial Scholarship.
- **Harford:** Janet Millenson received an e-mail from Harford member Debbie Stewart, a nurse at Johns Hopkins and long-term breast cancer survivor. With the help of fellow club member Colleen Webster, Debbie will be offering a weekend retreat in April to women who have recently completed breast cancer treatment. The goal is to afford a means of coping by interaction with nature. Called "A Breast Cancer Survivor Retreat Linking with Nature," it will offer bird watching, nature observation, meditation, journaling and other activities. The Harford Bird Club is supporting this activity.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Atlas: Jane Coskren reported that a company phasing out its birdseed sales donated a large supply of suet to the Howard Chapter. This is available to people throughout the state with proceeds going to the Atlas. Boxes of 12 cakes of suet sell for \$5; plain suet feeders are \$1; copper suet feeders are \$2.

Walter Ellison reported that 1,261 blocks out of 1,275 have been covered. Atlasers need to focus on night birds. Blockbusters are being sought for 2006.

Bird Conservation Alliance: Paul Zucker, along with Janet Millenson, attended a two-day meeting of the Alliance. This group consists of many birding organizations that have banded together to take actions that will make a difference to birds. The first day focused on national issues and the second day on international issues. The meeting covered a variety of current bird conservation issues, including Horseshoe Crab harvesting. For the first time the BCA is attempting to raise funds for a single project; it has launched an international appeal to save Mexican grasslands, "Saving the Saltillo Savanna." For more information, their website address is. www.birdconservationalliance.org.

Conference: Janet Shields reported that the Wild Bird Center of Gaithersburg will be coming to the conference. The Conference Committee is considering a birding quiz show with proceeds going to the atlas, along with a display of members' MD bird photos set up as a continuously running, computer-based slide show. Mike Bowen will conduct a Warbler Workshop.

Conservation: Maureen Harvey discussed the situation at Kingman Marsh in Washington, DC regarding the problem they are having with the Canada Goose. As a result, the Board voted to support in writing the Anacostia Watershed Society's plan to use lethal methods to control the Canada Goose population, which is causing severe ecological

damage at Kingman Marsh. A fact sheet will be prepared for the MOS website.

Investment: Martha Waugh distributed her written report. The current portfolio value is \$1,376,911 as of October 31. Martha explained that the value is down, reflecting current trends in the stock market. She is encouraged to note that the total income in the last fiscal year through October 31, 2005, was \$36,135, compared to \$28,353 for the same period in 2004.

Mailing List: Because of increased postage costs, Helen Horrocks has requested e-mail addresses for chapter members. She has received very few. Helen is now using e-mail to communicate membership updates with chapter treasurers. She announced that any people not paying dues by February 1 would be dropped from the membership list.

Membership: The new MOS brochure that Linda Keenan updated with current dues for each chapter will be available in a couple of days. The Talbot Chapter has produced one for their club and distributed it to nature centers, visitor centers, B&Bs, etc., with positive results. Linda suggests that other chapters might also want to consider producing one. Linda would like to do more outreach as we head towards spring, and she would welcome suggestions for the placement of the MOS brochures. It was suggested the brochures be made available at welcome centers throughout the state. Janet Millenson noted that chapter membership numbers are up, which is very encouraging.

Membership numbers are turning around in a very good way.

Publications: Maryland Birdlife.

Chan Robbins could not attend but asked Janet Millenson to give his report. Chan has proposed the following schedule in order to catch up on printing *Maryland Birdlife*. He will be producing the 2002 issues in Feb/March 2006 and the 2003 issues in April/May. He will take the summer off for atlasing and do the 2004 issues in the fall and 2005 issues in Nov/Dec.

Research: Janet Millenson gave Gwen Brewer's report. The committee has been waiting to receive applications by the December 1 deadline. Becky Kramer, a recipient of an MOS research award from St. Mary's College, submitted a copy of a manuscript on her research to the committee. She and her advisor, Dr. Jordan Price, have submitted the manuscript titled "Response to Song Types with Different Performance Levels in Red-winged Blackbirds" to the *Journal of Avian Biology*. MOS is thanked in the acknowledgements for providing funding.

Scholarship: Tom Strikwerda passed around six reports from 2005 scholarship attendees. Generally the reports were very favorable about their scholarship experiences. The deadline for 2006 scholarships is January 31. Tom has spent much time increasing the scholarship mailing list to include private schools. As a result, he was able to send out about 400 letters to private schools. He has also gotten more ideas for scholarship camps, including some weekend workshops. Tom will send information about the scholarships and their winners to Fran Saunders to run on the website. The Committee will look into designating one Youth Scholarship.

Youth Programs: George Radcliffe, who has worked with environmental education for the last 34 years, has learned that young people don't feel comfortable with large adult groups. They do love activities with their peers. They also love competition and recognition. George wants to increase youth membership in MOS. In order to do this, he will need to generate some activities to attract them. He will be developing a website to connect youth throughout the state. He needs an activity to get things started, and his students like the idea of a big day in the spring. DNR would like to sponsor an activity at Wye Island in late April. George is looking for statewide teacher contacts. He would like to see students' efforts recognized on the MOS website.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- Chapters should ask members interested in blockbusting for the Atlas in 2006 to contact Walter Ellison, rossgull@baybroadband.net.
- Chapters should advise members that persons who have not paid their annual dues will be taken off the mailing list as of February 1.
- Chapters may want to distribute flyers listing upcoming events; this has proven effective in attracting new members. Chapters are also asked to continue submitting "best practices" ideas to Linda Keenan, linda_s_keenan@yahoo.com.
- Tom Strikwerda will send additional information about scholarships and their winners to Fran Saunders to run on the website. The Scholarship Committee will look into designating one youth scholarship. Chapters should remind members that the deadline for scholarship applications is January 31.
- George Radcliffe will provide information so that his youth birding website can be linked to the main MOS website. He will also write up his Youth Programs suggestions for the Maryland Yellowthroat.
- A host location is needed for the March 4 MOS board meeting.
- Artists are invited to send applications for the annual pin contest to John Malcolm, smudgie@comcast.net, by January 16.
- Articles for the next issue of the *Yellowthroat* are due to Lydia Schindler, paulydia@erols.com, by January 20.
- Updated MOS membership brochures will be available at the March board meeting. If you need a supply before then, contact Janet Millenson, janet@twocrows.com.

President Janet Millenson adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
—Janet Shields
Secretary



Birds of Note

—by Les Roslund

- In wintertime, many birders hope for special sightings at their feeders. This winter at least three birders had those hopes fulfilled. In Silver Spring, Montgomery County, a RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD chose to stay around into January, thereby setting a record for late-season presence every day it was seen. The bird, a young male, remained until Jan 20. His survival was aided by a sympathetic host who provided suitable food and shelter. In Charles County and also in Worcester County, the surprising guests were YELLOW-THROATED WARBLERS. The Charles County bird came to the feeder regularly until Jan 28. The Worcester County bird was first seen on Jan 7 and last seen on Feb 24. A fascinating debate developed around the Worcester County bird, for several viewers felt it was a subspecies normally found only on the Piedmont and points farther west in Maryland.
- Another warbler that delighted Maryland birders this winter was a NASHVILLE WARBLER. This bird was first discovered Jan 25 along a Carroll Park trail in Baltimore City, and it lingered until at least Feb 28.
- Several GLAUCOUS GULLS gave fulfilling views this winter. One, a second-year bird, was first sighted at Fort McHenry, Baltimore, on Jan 26 and then relocated in Fells Point on Jan 28-29 and again on Feb 10. Another, a first-year bird, was spotted at the Easton landfill in Talbot County on Feb 15. Five days later it moved to the Cambridge waterfront in Dorchester County, where it was still present on March 8. Through its tame and cooperative behavior, this bird provided

great looks and grand photos for numerous birders. Yet another GLAUCOUS GULL was reported at the Ocean City jetty in Worcester County on Mar 10.

- The Ocean City inlet produced two reports of RAZOR-BILLS in January. These are always a treat, even though they are often present only long enough for a glimpse by the lucky few. Glimpse was the only view this year for two birds on Jan 18 and a single bird speeding out of the inlet on Jan 29.
- A highly unusual sighting was reported on Jan 29 by a talented birder who is new to our region. Stephen Davies of Montgomery County found a RUFF amongst some Killdeer near a little “wide spot in the road” called Bestpitch in Dorchester County. Though its presence was irregular, the RUFF remained until Feb 7 and provided nice views. Normal dates for seeing a RUFF in this region would be either four months earlier or two months later.
- Top bird award of the period goes to a VARIED THRUSH that blew into Anne Arundel County during a mid-Feb storm and stayed around for several weeks. This bird became a regular visitor at a secluded feeding spot on private property and could not be viewed from any public road. Nearby homeowners were gracious in accommodating viewers in small groups. The VARIED THRUSH has a well-known reputation as a wanderer in winter. Of the six previous sightings in Maryland, the most recent was in 1987. The 2006 bird was the first of this species reported for Anne Arundel County.

Victor, the Varied Thrush

George Jett, the initial MOS contact, describes the bird's visit.

In the wake of the Feb 18 snowstorm, Lynn and Chris Taylor of Lothian saw a bird in their yard they thought was a Varied Thrush. On Feb 20, they contacted Ann Wearmouth, past president of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society, to report it, describing a robin-type bird with a dark breast band like a Northern Flicker. Ann referred them to me, and Gwen [Brewer] and I were there within the hour. It was indeed a handsome Varied Thrush. I photographed the bird to document the record.

I then explained to the homeowners how exceptional this bird was—perhaps the first in Maryland in more than 25 years—and how keen an interest the birding community would have. I also cautioned them that they could be overwhelmed if this information became public. While the owners were receptive to having birders share this exciting record, they were concerned about having strangers around their house and yard. Since the bird could not be seen from the private road that runs in front of their house, but mostly from the bottom of the yard, I offered to serve as gatekeeper. They agreed. Later, Arlene Ripley, Gwen Brewer,



Varied Thrush—photo courtesy of George Jett.

and Rob Hilton helped share the tour responsibilities. We tried to get as many birders in as discreetly as possible, without disrupting the lifestyle of the neighbors, and respecting their rights and the bird's rights.

Shortly we determined the bird was regularly frequenting the yard next door, at the home of Lynn and Craig Emerson. This relieved some of the concerns of the original homeowners. Both families were unbelievably cooperative. (It turned out that the man in the second house was Rob Hilton's boss.)

The bird was high-strung, bolting at the slightest movement, and birders needed to be careful. Victor, as I named the thrush, seemed to follow a daily routine. He was mostly found when feeding on black oil sunflower seed under a *Magnolia grandiflora* tree viewable only from the bottom of the Emerson's driveway.

For the next two weeks, we took turns bringing in groups of no more than six birders at a time. Eventually more than 50 people got to see this very shy but beautiful bird under our "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

How did we select the invitees? As one birder described it, a "quid pro quo" process was put into place. We wanted to give back to birders who had given to us and the birds. We decided to pick people who needed the bird for a life bird or state bird (e.g., both a wedding present and life bird for Matt Hafner), had substantially contributed to the birds of Maryland and MOS, had helped share rare birds in the state, and—a criterion that I added—were willing contributors to the Junin Grebe research project in Peru. (See Bill Hubick's website for additional details on this conservation project.)

For various reasons, some very fine people did not get to see this bird, and we are sorry. Had the bird stayed longer, more birders would have been able to see it, thanks to the cooperation of the property owners. No one was specifically excluded, and we hope that birders who missed this bird will understand the unusual circumstances. We wish Victor good fortune on his trip home.

Identifying Hummingbirds (continued from page 11)

and Judy Fieth share the voice-overs; it's more pleasant and restful for the listener to hear two different voices alternate. PVP should employ a second narrator, preferably a female. (Why not Sheri Williamson? She wrote the script.) They also should tone down the background music, which often jumps in loudly and abruptly when the narrator pauses.

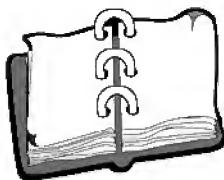
These personal peeves out of the way, I highly recommend this product. Think of it as a video encyclopedia rather than a movie to be watched all in one sitting. Sure, view the essential Introduction from beginning to end, but then take it just a few chapters at a time, concentrating on those species you are most likely to see on a forthcoming trip. Otherwise you may be swamped by a virtual tidal wave of information and never get out of the state of Maryland.

Hooked on Hummingbirds is much more in the tradition of the standard bird video, and it really is not intended for those who want principally to be able to identify hummingbirds and to distinguish them in the field. Sixteen species are covered; Plain-capped Starthroat is included but Berylline is omitted. There is a randomness to the chapter organization that I found confusing, and it is impossible to select and play just a single chapter—the DVD insists on running continuously. Occasionally you will be looking at a hummer on screen and have no idea which species it is. That can be annoying if your primary interest is in identification. (The Williamson/Dunn DVD consistently labels not only the birds, but the plants they are seen feeding on and the location of the shots.)

On the plus side, Tom Kaminski's narration is pleasantly light, airy, and humorous, an adjective not easily used to describe the PVP production. Kaminski has a well-modulated baritone voice, and the music on his video is quiet and unobtrusive. This is a product I would recommend be watched with a glass of wine, good birding friends—and no pencil and paper. It shows the lives and habits of hummingbirds, and especially their amazing flying abilities, in an informative and entertaining way. Any preaching or didacticism is totally absent. A final note: my initial copy of this DVD was defective and had to be returned. The replacement copy also is faulty and the last five minutes run in jerky fashion.

Maybe you'll purchase all of these products—the two DVDs and the three guides reviewed on page 24—as I did. If you aren't "into" hummingbirds enough to justify spending more than \$100 on finding out which is which, at least buy the Stokes book. It costs less than \$10 and will serve you well most of the time, no matter where in the U.S. your travels take you. And your non-birding friends will probably love Kaminski's *Hooked on Hummingbirds*.

—Michael Bowen
Montgomery Bird Club



MOS Calendar

May-June 2006

Tuesday, May 2

B Baltimore. Lake Roland. Habitats include woods, lake, streams, and marsh. Meet 8:30 AM at footbridge. Directions: from I-695 north of the city, take exit 23 south, I-83 Jones Falls Expy. Exit at North Ave and proceed east (left), get in left lane, go to traffic light at Falls Rd. Go left (north) on Falls Rd, right lane. Just after Lake Ave traffic light, turn right (east) at south end of Falls Rd bridge. Follow tight curve to right, go 0.5 mile through streamside woods to intersection. Park and walk to footbridge. Leader: Shirley Geddes, 410-377-6583 or sgdeddes@mindspring.com.

MEETING. Baltimore. *Gene Scarpulla* will present "Restoration at Hart-Miller Island." 7:30 PM, Cylburn Arboretum, 4915 Greenspring Ave. Info: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Wednesday, May 3

MEETING. Carroll. *Dave Harvey* will present this year's "Final Exam." 7:30 PM at the Senior Center, Stoner Ave, Westminster. For more info, contact Laura Tarbell, 410-857-1109.

B Baltimore. Wednesday evening walks at Ft McHenry, through May. These 2-hr walks start at 6 PM and cover the wetland trails and/or part of the Fort lawn. Meet outside the gates at the lot at Wallace St and Fort Ave. Cancelled if raining. For more info, contact Jim Peters at 410-429-0966.

Thursday, May 4

B Montgomery. Flag Ponds, Calvert Co. Two-thirds day. Local expert Arlene Ripley leads us through woods, bog, and beach of this limited-access nature park to see migrants as well as arriving breeders, notably Yellow-throated Warbler, as well as such spring flora as showy orchis. Limit

12. Reservations required. Coordinators: Lydia Schindler, 301-977-5252, and Linda Friedland, 301-983-2136.

B Washington. Sideling Hill to search for spring warblers. Call leader Dave Weesner, 301-432-7718, for start time and meeting place.

MEETING. Frederick. *Larry and Jean Fry* will present "Birding Great Britain—The Shetland Islands and Wales." 7 PM in the Community Rm at the C. Burr Artz Library in downtown Frederick. Call Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098 for add'l info.

Friday, May 5

MEETING. Harford. Speaker *Matt Hafner*. Subject TBA. 7 PM at the Churchville Presbyterian Church, MD 22 and MD 136.

B Montgomery. Pennyfield Lock, C&O Canal. Half day. Birding by ear (with designated intervals for talking). Migrant and nesting landbirds. Meet at the end of Pennyfield Lock Rd at 7 AM. Reservations required. Leaders: Cyndie Loeper, 301-530-8226, and Ann Lucy, 301-229-8810.

MEETING. Anne Arundel. "Horseshoe Crabs and Shorebirds in DE Bay" by *Gerald Winegrad*. 8 PM. Hosts: Wafi Rains and Bobbi Reichwein. Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Info: Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336.

Saturday, May 6

B Montgomery. Upper Watts Branch, Rockville. Half day. Migrant warblers, vireos, thrushes, and assorted woodland residents, including possible Red-shouldered Hawks.

Meet 8 AM at corner of Princeton Pl and Fordham St. Limit 12. Reservations required. Leader: Paul O'Brien, 301-424-6491.

B FRED ARCHIBALD MAY COUNT/BIRDATHON. **Frederick.** Meet 6 AM at the Sanctuary. Contact Bob Schaefer, 301-831-5660 or rjs30@erols.com, for further info.

B Anne Arundel. Calvert Co. Full day. We will be visiting a number of prime birding locations in Calvert Co looking for migrants, resident birds, shorebirds, and waterfowl. There is a good chance of seeing Red-headed Woodpecker. Meet 6:30 AM at Parole P&R. Bring lunch. Leader: Nick Nicholson, 410-721-4814.

B Baltimore. Soldiers Delight. Warblers, flycatchers, and tanagers are featured as spring migration heats up in this globally rare ecosystem. Meet 7:30 AM. Directions: from I-695, take exit 18 west, Liberty Rd, bear right onto Deer Park Rd just before traffic light and water tower, go 2 miles to historical marker, overlook, and gravel lot on left. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6849 or orioleke1@comcast.net.

B Baltimore. Patterson Park (at the White House). Migrants found in this urban park have included Blue-headed, Red-eyed, White-eyed, and Warbling Vireos, as well as Wood, Swainson's, and Gray-cheeked Thrushes, Veery, Summer Tanager, Merlin, and woodcock. Meet 8 AM. Directions: From downtown Balt., drive east up Pratt St, go left onto South Patterson Park Ave and park on this street in the first or second block. The White House (27 South Patterson Park Ave) is just inside the west edge of the park at intersection of South Patterson Park Ave and Lombard St. Leader: Dave Curson, 410-675-4963.

H **BIG DAY.** Howard. All-day listing extravaganza! Limit 12. Plan to spend the day hiking around the county in search of as many species as possible. All types of footwear needed. Bring food and drinks. Brief lunch stop planned. Facilities in some spots. Call Bonnie Ott to sign up, 410-461-3361.

H **Harford.** Susquehanna SP. Known to draw traveling birds and birders alike, this trip annually reaffirms the park's reputation as one of the preeminent local birding spots. Veteran leader Les Eastman will help you pick through a myriad of songbirds in hopes of getting good looks at northbound migrants, including Chestnut-sided, Black-throated Blue and Black-throated Warblers, as well as Baltimore and Orchard Orioles. Meet 7 AM at the Conowingo Dam parking lot. Contact Les at 410-734-6969 for more info.

Sunday, May 7

H **Cecil.** Cecil Warblers. A mix of hotspots for spring migrants. Meet 7 AM at Big Elk Mall (corner of Rtes 40 and 213), Elkton, near the Dunkin' Donuts. Leader, Marcia Watson, mww@udel.edu.

H **AUDREY CARROLL MAY COUNT/BIRDATHON.** Frederick. Meet 6 AM at the Sanctuary. Call Dave Smith, 410-549-7082 for further info.

H **Montgomery.** Little Bennett RP. Half day. Near peak migration for warblers and vireos, including those breeding in this varied habitat. Contact the leader for time and directions. Reservations required. Leader: Gemma Radko 301-607-4374.

H **Talbot.** Tuckahoe SP and Adkins Arboretum. Streambottoms to uplands for a variety of migrants. Bring lunch. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center, Easton. Leaders: Bill and Karen Harris.

H **Carroll.** McKeldin. It's time for spring warblers and we're sure to find a variety here. Moderate to rough terrain. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot on the west side of Marriottsville Rd just south of the bridge over the Patapsco River (by the railroad tracks) in Henryton. For more info, contact trip leader Bob Ringler, 410-549-6031.

H **Anne Arundel.** Jug Bay Wetlands. Half day. Migrant songbirds, resident birds, shorebirds, and waterfowl. Depart 7 AM from Parole P&R. Leader: Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336.

H **Baltimore.** Patuxent North Tract (Research Refuge). Trip to PG Co site for Summer Tanager, Blue Grosbeak, chat, and other southern specialty birds. Prothonotary Warbler possible. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695 exit 8. Leader: Steve Sanford, 410-922-5103 or scartan@verizon.net.

H **Baltimore.** Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. Meet 8:30 AM at porch of mansion for easy birding without a designated leader. 4915 Greenspring Ave. Coordinator: Joe Lewandowski, 410-358-7834 or ilenel@juno.com.

H **Baltimore.** Spring Butterflies at Soldiers Delight. Butterfly expert Dick Smith will lead us through this globally rare ecosystem. In addition to spring butterflies such as the orange falcate and eastern pine elfin, expect many native grasses and flowers. Meet 1 PM. Directions: From I-695, take exit 18, Liberty Rd, go west 4 miles, bear right onto Deer Park Rd just before traffic light and water tower, go approximately 1 mile to the Soldiers Delight Visitor/Nature Center on left. Cancelled if raining. Call or e-mail to confirm date. Coordinator: Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.

H **Patuxent.** Fran Uhler NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U and MARC line. No reservations required.

H **Harford.** Eden Mill Bird Banding. Grab a handful of in-hand bird photos with Mark Johnson and Les Eastman as they retrieve handfuls of sparrows, warblers, and vireos from the nets of the Eden Mill banding station. Leisurely roadside hike through this scenic park along upper Deer Creek will follow after several net checks and a demonstration of the art and science of handling birds. Like fishing, you never know what will turn up in the nets next! Meet 8 AM at parking lot, about a half mile north of the Mill House. Contact Mark Johnson at 410-692-5978 for details.

Tuesday, May 9

MEETING. Kent. Speaker and program TBA. 7:30 PM. Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E. Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

H **Baltimore.** Lake Roland. See May 2 listing. Leader: Ruth Culbertson, 410-825-1379.

H **Howard.** Henryton. Birds and wildflowers. Half day. Meet 8:30 AM at end of Henryton Rd. Mostly flat trail along Patapsco River. Trail may be muddy in spots. No facilities. Leaders: Bob and Jo Solem, 301-725-5037.

H **Montgomery.** Beach (Drive) Birding in Montgomery Co. Deep in the heart of suburbia, we will comb the lower Montgomery Co section of Rock Creek RP for cuckoos, hummingbirds, orioles, vireos, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, and other migrants. Meet 6:30 AM. Call leader for reservations and directions. Limit 8. Leader: Howard Youth, 301-915-0071 or howard.youth@starpower.net.

Thursday, May 11

MEETING. Howard. "Costa Rican Natural History," by Dennis and Jane Coskren. Costa Rica has a mix of northern and southern biota, where many of our familiar birds

MOS Calendar (*continued from page 17*)

mingle in winter with the more exotic denizens of rain and cloud forests. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Jeff Friedhoffer, 410-998-5336.

Friday, May 12

■ Montgomery. Patuxent River Drift Boat Trip, PG Co. Half day. Joint trip with ANS. Peak migration time for songbirds. Also marsh and waterbirds. Waterproof footwear and insect repellent advisable. Check ANS News for directions to the park. Meet 6:30 AM at park entrance gate. A Patuxent Park participant fee may be collected. Reservations required. Leader: Paul DuMont 703-931-8994.

■ Baltimore. Poplar Island. This is an environmental restoration project similar to Hart-Miller; when completed, it will provide approximately 570 acres of wetland and 570 acres of upland habitat. Poplar Island is reached by a 20-30 minute boat ride from Tilghman Island. Meet 6:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R or 9 AM at Tilghman Island. Scopes helpful. Facilities available. Bring snacks if desired. Lunch at a local restaurant. Reservations required. Leader: Chrissy Albanese. Coordinator: Gail Frantz, 410-833-7135 or guineabird@aol.com.

Saturday, May 13

■ MAY COUNT. Allegany, Garrett. To participate in Allegany Co and get directions to tally rally, contact J.B. Churchill, 301-689-8344, or jchurchi@atlanticbb.net. To participate in Garrett Co, contact Fran Pope, 301-334-4908 or fpope@gcnetmail.net. Tally rally will be held at J.B.'s house in Frostburg on Mon, May 15 at 7 PM.

■ MAY COUNT. Anne Arundel. Take part in this statewide count by participating in your own county. Please call Dotty Mumford, 410-849-8336, to let her know where you are counting to avoid duplicating efforts.

**May Count 2006
Saturday, May 13**

Each year during spring migration we take a statewide snapshot of the birds of Maryland. This year the May Count, a 24-hour effort held on the second Saturday of the month, is scheduled for May 13. Get involved and have a great time!

Like Christmas Bird Counts, the May Count is conducted by volunteers who enjoy birding. You don't need to be an expert to participate, and you can spend part, most, or all of the day out in the field. The more volunteers, the better the coverage. And please consider helping out on the Eastern Shore, where there's lots of wonderful habitat but fewer birders.

Here's how to get involved: First, consult the Calendar for May 13. You'll find a list of May Count compilers by county, with their contact information; get in touch with the person for the area you're interested in. The compiler will send you an up-to-date field checklist for your tally, plus detailed guidance on how the count works. The checklist will also be available for download from the MOS website (www.mdbirds.org). Then get set for a day of non-stop birding fun!

For additional information, contact the Statewide Coordinator, Dennis Coskren, coskren@erols.com or 410-381-7344.

—Janet Millenson

■ MAY COUNT. Baltimore. All-day count of birds in Baltimore City and Co. For area assignments, call compiler Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdlmartin@aol.com.

■ MAY COUNT. Calvert. Arlene Ripley, arleneripley@comcast.net or 301-855-2848.

■ MAY COUNT. Caroline. Marianna Nuttle, birdlady25@verizon.net or 410-479-2644.

■ MAY COUNT. Carroll. Count birds in your backyard, in your neighborhood, or at your favorite birding spot in Carroll Co. All input welcome and important to the bird club. Please coordinate locations with Bill Ellis at 410-781-7113. Join the tally rally at the home of Jerry and Laura Tarbell at 7 PM. RSVP to

the Tarbells at 410-857-1109. Food or \$ donation, please.

■ MAY COUNT. Cecil. Coordinator: Parke John, parke@del.net.

■ MAY COUNT. Charles. George Jett, gjmjett@comcast.net or 301-843-3524.

■ MAY COUNT. Dorchester. Harry Armistead, harryarmistead@hotmail.com or 215-248-4120.

■ MAY COUNT. Frederick. Join the crowd for our local countywide count. Contact Mike Welch, 301-874-5828, to assist.

■ MAY COUNT. Harford. Mark Johnson, mark.s.johnson@us.army.mil or 410-692-5978.

■ MAY COUNT. Howard. Kevin Heffernan, kjheff@aol.com or 410-418-8731.

■ MAY COUNT. Kent. An all-day effort to census all birds in Kent Co. Join a field party or count in your neighborhood. For details, contact one of the leaders: Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net, and Peter Mann, 410-648-5205 or pmann@epl-inc.com.

■ MAY COUNT. Montgomery. A good excuse to count in your atlas block! Compiler and contact person: Rick Sussman, 301-774-1185 or warblerick@aol.com.

■ MAY COUNT. Prince George's. Fred Fallon, fwfallon@earthlink.net or 301-249-1518.

■ MAY COUNT. Queen Anne's. Glenn Therres, 410-643-7422.

■ MAY COUNT. St. Mary's. Bob Boxwell, robertjohnboxwell@yahoo.com or 410-394-1300 or 410-610-5124.

■ MAY COUNT. Somerset. Charles Vaughn, essc@comcast.net or 410-742-7221.

■ MAY COUNT. Talbot. Les Coble, lescoble@friend.ly.net or 410-820-6165.

■ MAY COUNT. Washington. Contact Dave Weesner, 301-432-7718, to participate.

■ MAY COUNT. Wicomico. Everyone can participate! Contact Ellen Lawler for checklists and details, 410-546-9056.

■ MAY COUNT. Worcester. Mark Hoffman, wcbirding@adelphia.net or 443-223-4587.

■ MAY COUNT. District of Columbia. No assigned compiler. Please contact Statewide Coordinator, Dennis Coskren, coskren@erols.com or 410-381-7344.

■ Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Ft. McHenry. A continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. Meet 8 AM at the Visitor Center. Cancelled in bad weather (high winds, fog, rain, snow). Directions: from I-695 southwest of the city, take exit 11, I-95, north towards the city. Get off at exit 55, Hanover St. Turn east (right) on McComas St, left (north) on Key Hwy. First left at Lawrence St and left onto Fort Ave. Continue through gateway into the park. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

■ Talbot. Pea Patch Island, DE. Joint trip with Caroline Bird Club. Largest heron rookery north of FL. Also includes a tour of historic Ft. Delaware. Cost \$8 per person for the boat ride and program at the fort. Bring lunch. We expect to be back in Easton by 5 PM. Meet 7 AM in front of Acme at Tred Avon Shopping Center, Easton. Info: Mark Scallion, 410-310-2385.

Sunday, May 14

■ Talbot. Terrapin Park. Woodland species and birds of the shoreline. Breakfast host: Nancy and Marty O'Connor. Depart 7 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651 or birder231@hotmail.com.

■ Baltimore. Milford Mill Park. For migrant warblers, thrushes, and other songbirds. Wilson's Warbler possible. Meet 7:30 AM on Milford Mill Rd. Directions: from I-695, exit 18 (Liberty Rd), proceed west to first light at Washington Ave. Turn right, proceed to light on Milford Mill Rd just after the overhead bridge. Leader: Bryce Butler, 410-728-0646 or capitano.bryce@verizon.net.

■ Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. See May 7 listing.

■ Harford. Mother's Day at Sweet Air. Join Denise and Mark Johnson for a visit to this fittingly named park on this special day. The 1,250-acre Sweet Air section of the Gunpowder Falls SP offers a network of nearly 12 miles of well-defined trails running along fields, pine plantations, riverside woodlands, and a pond. A mixed bag of interesting warblers and songbirds is sure to make the day's list. Meet 7:30 AM at parking lot at end of the Dalton-Bevard entrance road. Contact Mark at 410-692-5978 for more info.

Tuesday, May 16

■ Baltimore. Lake Roland. See May 2 listing. Leader: Josie Gray, 410-922-1837.

■ Wednesday, May 17
MEETING. Montgomery. Arlene Ripley will present "India, Nature's Exotic Jewel." Join Arlene Ripley as she takes us on a photographic journey to the Indian Subcontinent, where she and her husband experienced three weeks of nature travel in early 2004. 7:30 PM, Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

Thursday, May 18

MEETING. Caroline. "Birds of Ecuador" presented by Dr. Gwenda L. Brewer. 7:30 PM. Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

■ Baltimore. North Central Railroad Trail. 8 AM. We will visit a spot north of Monkton where migrants and nesters are (usually) easy to find. Minimal walking. Trip limited to 12. Reservations required. Contact the leader by May 16 for reservations and info. Leader: Debbie Terry, 410-252-8771 or gt5s@bcpl.net.

Friday, May 19

■ Harford. Owl Prowl. Meet 8 PM at Dublin Elementary. Contact Dave Webb, 410-939-3537, for details and directions.

Saturday, May 20

■ Tri-County. Night birds of the marsh and forest at Truitt's Landing, Worcester Co. Meet 6 PM at Ward Museum, Salisbury. Leader: Sam Dyke, 410-742-5497.

■ Talbot. Bombay Hook NWR, Woodland WMA, and Thorofare Rd. Migrating shorebirds and wading species. Bring lunch. Depart 6:30 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton or 7 AM from LL Bean parking area, Prime Outlets, Queenstown. Leader: Charles Hopkins, 410-763-8742.

■ Patuxent. Governor Bridge NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge Park. No reservations required. Park is located on Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 2 miles east of MD 301.

■ Anne Arundel. DE Bay. Gerald Winegrad, 410-280-8956, will lead this all-day trip to a number of DE Bay locations for migrant shorebirds and songbirds. Meet 7:45 AM at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Bring lunch or one can be purchased. Plan on a dinner stop on the way home, while we tally the birds we've seen.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 19)

H Baltimore. Halethorpe Ponds. Half day. Diverse habitats of this little-birded area include river, ponds, floodplain woods, and a powerline. Possible side trip to Mears Farm area and Patapsco Valley SP. Bring insect repellent, water, and snacks. Paths may be wet and muddy. Meet 7:30 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-895, exit 8. Leader: Joel Martin, 410-744-9211 or jcdimartin@aol.com.

H Howard. Blue Mash. A Montgomery Co park that holds the potential for a wide variety of species: late waterfowl, shorebirds, bobwhite, Cliff Swallows, and songbirds. Terrain is fairly level but trails may be muddy; waterproof footwear is encouraged. Plan on 4 hrs at Blue Mash and another hour in the Triadelphia area on the way home. The latter has facilities. Meet 6:30 AM at Broken Land Pkwy P&R (west). Plan to return to the P&R by 12:30 PM. Info: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361.

H Harford. Palmer SP. Considered one of the finest places in the county to find forest interior birds and wildflowers such as yellow lady's-slipper. This 650-acre SP offers beautiful scenery along Deer Creek and access to one of the few large blocks of undisturbed forest surviving in the county. Moderate hiking on dirt paths. Meet 7 AM at the Rte 1 and MD 136 Wawa. Contact Dave Ziolkowski, 443-299-8453 for more info.

H Cecil. Woodlawn Nature Preserve. Half day. Meet 7 AM at Woodlawn parking lot. Trip Coordinator: Richard Donham, 610-932-0634 or donhamr@zoominternet.net.

H Howard and Montgomery. Hot Spots for Red Knots. Full day. Joint trip with Howard Co Bird Club. Meet 8:30 AM at Bombay Hook NWR Visitor Center. Trip will explore refuge and other DE Bay sites for shorebirds, waterfowl, etc. Pack food, water, insect repellent, and other items needed for a full day in the field. Kurt Schwarz will co-lead. Reservations required. Leader: Cyndie Loeper, 301-530-8226.

Saturday-Sunday, May 20-28

H Frederick. Crane Creek, Ohio, and Michigan. Warblers are the target on this week-long trip to explore OH and MI during spring migration. Contact Mike Welch, 301-874-5828, for further info.

Sunday, May 21

H Baltimore. Owings Mills Mall Wetland. Willow Flycatcher, Green Heron, Blue Grosbeak, Yellow-breasted Chat, and Orchard Oriole are just a few of the birds that breed in and around this mall's wetland area. Meet 7:30 AM at Macy's lot across from the gas station on Red Run Blvd. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. See May 7 listing.

H Talbot. Easton Streambottoms. Waterthrush and other migrants. Breakfast host: Bill and Karen Harris. Depart 7 AM from Tred Avon Shopping Center parking lot in front of Acme, Easton. Leader: Les Coble, 410-820-6165.

H Anne Arundel. Kinder Farm Park. George Thomas, 410-647-5082, will lead this half-day walk looking for migrant and resident birds, and maybe a couple of waders. Meet 7 AM at the Jones Station P&R.

H Harford. Susquehanna SP. Return trip to this lush riverside park, this time to the Wilkinson Rd area for northbound migrants and late spring natural history. Bird list could include Yellow- and Black-billed Cuckoos and Bay-breasted, Blackburnian, Cape May, and Cerulean Warblers, along with late wildflowers and zebra swallowtails. Meet 6:30 AM at Darlington Elementary. Contact Russ Kovach, 443-386-4787 for more info.

Tuesday, May 23

MEETING. Washington. Bob Schaefer will present "Wildlife of Northern Canada: Jaegers to Grizzly Bears." Mt. Aetna Nature Center, 7:30 PM. Call 301-797-8454 for more info.

H Baltimore. Lake Roland. See May 2 listing. Leader: Mary Jo Campbell, 410-584-7696 or camp1940@aol.com.

Saturday, May 27

H Baltimore. DE Bay. Full-day trip for a wide variety of migrating shorebirds. Possible spectacular assemblage of breeding-plumaged turnstones, Sanderlings, and Red Knots. Curlew Sandpiper possible. Be prepared for possible heat and biting insects. Minimal walking involved. Scopes very useful. Bring a lunch. Meet 7 AM at Nursery Road P&R, I-695 exit 8. Alternatively, meet 9 AM at the Bombay Hook Visitor Center lot. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Harford. DE Shorebirds. Full-day adventure to Bombay Hook and adjacent areas. Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, and Red Knot are possible, but that's not all, as European waifs, western strays, and wind-blown pelagics commonly occur. Bring lunch and meet 7 AM at the MD 155 and I-95 P&R. Contact leader Matt Hafner, 410-971-3203, or Russ Kovach, 443-386-4787 for more info.

Sunday, May 28

H ATLAS BLOCKBUSTING. Talbot. Trip Leaders: Wayne Bell and Terry Allen. Details TBA.

H Baltimore. Cylburn Arboretum. Self-guided walk. See May 7 listing.

H Harford. Harford Shorebird Tour. Marvel at flocks of peeps and search for species that are tough to find locally, such as Black-bellied Plover, Dunlin, Red Knot, Whimbrel, and Eskimo Curlew. Beginners interested in learning the basics of shorebird identification and experienced watchers searching for rarities will enjoy this morning trip to Havre de Grace and neighboring sites. Scopes helpful. Meet at the Tydings Marina at 7 AM. Leader: Dave Webb, 410-939-3537.

Monday, May 29

Harford. Hidden Valley/Upper Deer Creek. Join local resident and natural historian Dennis Kirkwood to search for Worm-eating Warbler, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and Scarlet Tanager. Meet at Hidden Valley (north end of Madonna Rd) at 7 AM. For further info, contact Dennis Kirkwood at 410-692-5905.

Tuesday, May 30

Baltimore. Lake Roland. See May 2 listing. Leader: Paul Noell, 410-243-2652 or myconut@msn.com.

Wednesday, May 31

Montgomery. Green Ridge SF, Allegany Co. Full day. Target birds include Ruffed Grouse, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and nesting vireos and warblers (Hooded, Cerulean, Worm-eating, etc). Meet 7 AM at Sideling Hill Visitor Center parking lot off I-68. Bring snacks, beverages, lunch, and insect repellent. Wear sturdy shoes; some hiking involved. Four-wheel drive or pickup truck recommended (but not necessary). Prior arrangements to car pool, via leader, highly suggested. Trip limited to 12 people. Make reservations (required) by May 28. Leader: Jim Green, 301-208-2393 or jgreen@smokeyglenfarm.com.

Thursday, June 1

ANNUAL PICNIC. Frederick. Lilypons. Bring binoculars, a dish to share, plate, drink, and utensils. Meet at 6 PM for birding and eats. Call Marcia Balestri, 301-473-5098 for add'l info.

Saturday, June 3

ATLAS BLOCKBUSTING. Frederick. Meet 6:30 AM at Baker Park. For info contact Dave Smith, 410-549-7082.

Harford. Nest-Searching: Riverside Fields and Parklands surrounding Bel Air. Meet 7 AM at Burger King on Bel Air South Pkwy. Contact leader Lynn Davis, 410-569-0504, for more details.

ANNUAL PICNIC. Anne Arundel.

4 PM. For info contact host, Kirsten Enzinger, at 410-867-0798.

Sunday, June 4

Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U and MARC line. No reservations required.

Baltimore. Soldiers Delight for Nesting Birds. Possible Summer and Scarlet Tanagers, Yellow-breasted Chat, White-eyed Vireo, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Field Sparrow, as well as Hooded, Prairie, and Pine Warblers. Meet 7:30 AM. For directions, see May 6.

ANNUAL PICNIC. Kent. 5 PM. Join us for a potluck picnic at the Lodge at Eastern Neck NWR. For info contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568; or Peter Mann, 410-648-5205.

Wednesday, June 7

ATLAS BLOCKBUSTING. Montgomery. Half day. This is the last year of the Atlas Project and several county blocks merit further coverage, so County Atlas Coordinator Jim Green has scheduled four blockbusting trips, starting today. Jim will set up teams, pairing birders with little or no atlasing experience with persons who have been atlasing for several years. Please sign up early so that Jim can get the teams coordinated. Jim Green, 301-208-2393 or jgreen@smokeyglenfarm.com.

Friday-Sunday, June 9-11

MOS CONFERENCE. This year's state conference will be held at the Rocky Gap Lodge, Allegany Co.

Saturday, June 10

Baltimore. Carroll Co Field Birds. Full day. Bird the fields of Carroll and/or Frederick Cos for nesting Vesper, Grasshopper, Field, and possible Savannah Sparrows, Bobolink, Dickcissel, Horned Lark, meadowlark, Willow Flycatcher, and Red-headed Woodpecker. Bring lunch. Rain date: June 24. Meet

7:30 AM at P&R, extreme east end of I-70 (inside I-695). Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Sunday, June 11

Harford. Nest-Searching at Gunpowder SP. Meet 7 AM at the Jerusalem Mill. Contact Mark Johnson, 410-692-5978, for more info.

Thursday, June 15

POTLUCK/FALL PLANNING MEETING. Talbot. Hosts: Mark and Susanna Scallion, 410-310-2385. 6 PM at the Pickering Creek Audubon Center. Potluck Dinner celebrating a year of great birding! All members welcome.

Saturday, June 17

MOS BOARD MEETING. Hosted by the Washington County Bird Club at Greenbrier SP. Info: Janet Shields, MOS Secretary, 301-415-7109 or janetbill@prodigy.net.

Patuxent. Governor Bridge NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge Park. No reservations required. Park is located on Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 2 miles east of MD 301.

Baltimore. Patapsco Valley SP for Nesting Birds. Blue-winged, Prairie, Pine Warblers and Yellow-breasted Chat are among the 6 confirmed (11 possible) breeding warblers in the area. Boots recommended. Meet 7:30 AM. Directions: From I-695, take Liberty Rd (Exit 18/MD Rte 26) west for 2 miles to Old Court Rd (MD Rte 125). Turn left on Old Court Rd and drive 5.5 miles through Granite to the Patapsco River. Cross the bridge and park just beyond the railroad tracks. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

ATLAS BLOCKBUSTING. Harford. Meet 7 AM at North Harford Elementary. Contact Dennis Kirkwood, 410-692-5905 for details.

MOS Calendar (*continued from page 21*)

■ ATLAS BLOCKBUSTING. Montgomery. See June 7 listing.

Sunday, June 18

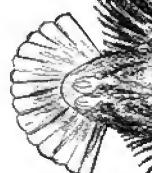
■ ATLAS BLOCKBUSTING. Harford. Meet 6:30 AM at Whiteford Library. Contact Russ Kovach, 443-386-4787 for details.

Tuesday June 20

ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING. Allegany. Meet 7 PM at J.B. Churchill's house; contact J.B. for directions. We'll be deciding about the schedule for 2006/2007, so bring your ideas for speakers, field trips, and other projects.

Saturday, June 24

■ Harford. Stoney SF. Take a summer look at this impressive natural area. Here you may witness a colorful assortment of wildflowers and nesting birds. Led by experienced birder Jean Wheeler and wildflower guru Colleen Webster, trip-goers are likely to see Scarlet Tanager, Red-eyed Vireo, Wood Thrush, Ovenbird, and more. Wildflower possibilities include late-blooming blue cohosh, wild geranium, and even yellow lady's-slipper. Meet 7 AM at the McDonald's parking lot near the intersection of Rte 7 and MD 543 (Riverside Shopping Center). Contact Jean Wheeler, 410-879-7424, for info.

Telling Tales

A friend alerted me to woodcocks displaying on her farm. I took 10 young birders from the local elementary school, and their parents, on a field trip the next evening. We missed any flight display, but we did hear the birds peenting. Wow! Ten elementary school kids being quiet in a field for nearly 45 minutes. Certainly more amazing than the woodcocks peenting!

—Jim Wilson

Sunday, June 25

PICNIC. Washington. Washington Monument SP. Bring your own plate, cup, utensils, and a drink. Also, please bring a dish to share. Starts at 4 PM. Call 301-797-8454 for directions.

Saturday, July 8

■ Baltimore. Family Birding at Banneker Park. Join Keith Costley for an easy hike around the trails of this historic site. Bring your children and grandchildren ages 5 years and up to enjoy watching nesting bluebirds, wrens, robins, and many other natural happenings at this facility. The park also has a museum. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Meet 9 AM. Directions: From I-695 take Rte 40 west to Rolling Rd and turn left. At second traffic light, turn right onto Old Frederick Rd and proceed approximately 1.3 miles, then turn right onto Oella Ave. Continue 0.2 miles to park entrance on the left. Leader: Keith Eric Costley, 443-985-6489 or oriolekec1@comcast.net.

■ Harford. Owling Caravan. Search Harford countryside for Great Horned and Barred Owls and screech-owls. Meet 8:30 PM at the C. Milton Wright parking lot. Contact Dave Ziolkowski, 443-299-8453 for info.

Friday, July 14

■ Montgomery. DE Coastal Areas. Joint trip with ANS. Shorebirds, waterbirds, and some songbirds along wood/marsh trail edges. Meet 7:30 AM in the Visitor Center parking lot at Bombay Hook NWR. Bring lunch. Reservations required. Leader: John Bjerke, 301-963-8525.

Saturday, July 15

■ ATLAS BLOCKBUSTING. Allegany. Ray Kiddy will lead an atlas trip on a last-ditch effort to fill in those blanks on the atlas pages. Specifics have yet to be determined. Meet at the Western MD Station, Cumberland, at 9 AM. Contact Ray Kiddy, 301-729-1972 for more info.

■ ATLAS BLOCKBUSTING. Montgomery. See June 7 listing.

Sunday, July 16

■ Harford. Rarity Chase. Meet 7:30 AM at the MD 155/I-95 P&R. Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and lunch for this three-quarters-day trip in search of the hottest rarities. Scopes helpful. Leader: Dave Larkin, 410-569-8319.

Friday, July 21

SOCIAL. Harford. 6:30 PM. Location TBA. Social to be followed by owl prowls.

Tuesday, July 25

■ ATLAS BLOCKBUSTING. Montgomery. See June 7 listing.

Saturday, July 29

■ Montgomery. DE Coastal Areas. Shorebirds, waterbirds, and some songbirds along wood/marsh trail edges. Bring lunch. Reservations required. Call Cyndie Loeper for meeting time and place. Leaders: Hugh Mahanes and Cyndie Loeper, 301-530-8226 or cyndieloeper@comcast.net.

Saturday, July 29 or Saturday, August 5

■ Harford. Twilight Canoeing at Eden Mill. Take in a warm summer evening of natural history and easy exercise along one of upper Deer Creek's most scenic stretches. Dave Ziolkowski and natural historian/expert canoeist Frank Marsden interpret the sights, sounds, and smells to make this a multi-sensory experience. Trip meets at 4:30 PM. Space is limited, so make reservations beforehand. \$5 fee goes towards club's donation to nature center. Contact Dave Ziolkowski, 443-299-8453, for info and reservations.

Friday, August 11

HUMMINGBIRD HAPPY HOUR. Harford. 6 PM. Bring dish and beverage. Contact Les Eastman, 410-734-6969, for more info.

Saturday, August 12

SUMMER PICNIC. Carroll. Meet 1 PM at the Hoffman residence. Please contact Amy Hoffman at 410-549-3598 to coordinate your potluck dish.

Saturday, August 19

H Harford. Bombay Hook NWR. Join Dennis Kirkwood on a three-quarters-day adventure to this birding hotspot for shorebirds and the hottest rarities. Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Stilt Sandpiper, and Wilson's Phalarope possible. Bring sunscreen, insect repellent, and lunch. Scopes helpful. Meet 7 AM at the MD 155/I-95 P&R. Contact Dennis at 410-692-5905 for further info.

H Montgomery. DE Coastal Areas. See July 29 listing. Leaders: Frank Witebsky and Cyndie Loeper, 301-530-8226 or cynnie_loepper@comcast.net.

Sunday, August 20

H Harford. Harford Shorebirds. Join experienced shorebirders Les Eastman and John Gallo to search for southbound shorebirds, such as Semipalmated Plovers and Solitary and Pectoral Sandpipers. Scopes helpful. Meet 8 AM at Swan Harbor. Contact John Gallo at 410-459-0548 for details.

Friday, August 25

H Harford. Nighthawk Watch. Drive to the top of Bel Air's only parking garage to greet nighthawks as they head out for their evening feast. Meet at the top level at 6:30 PM. Call Randy Robertson, 410-273-9029, for details.

Chapter Chatter (*continued from page 9*)

support during their ordeal, and look forward to making 2006 a banner year for WCOS.

Liriodendron, a beautiful old mansion in Bel Air with wonderful grounds, will be the site of a June wedding of **Harford's** Matt Hafner to Kimberly Caughey. The bride, who is obtaining a doctor of veterinary medicine degree in Blacksburg, VA, has chased several rare birds with Matt and seen close to 500 species in their travels. Nonetheless, says Matt, "she refuses to consider herself an obsessive birder."

H Montgomery. Poplar Island. Half day. Wonderful opportunity to visit this very birdy island. For approximately 3 hrs, bus/van will drive around island, stopping wherever birding looks good. Scopes helpful. Reservations required. Call coordinator for start time and directions. Leader: Chrissy Ablanese. Coordinator: Helen Patton, 301-588-5418.

Saturday, August 26

H Baltimore. DE Bay. Full-day trip for herons and a wide variety of migrating shorebirds including Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets. Minimal walking involved. Bring lunch. Be prepared for heat and biting insects. Scopes useful. Meet 7 AM at Nursery Rd P&R, I-695 exit 8 or, alternatively, 9:30 AM at Bombay Hook Visitor Center lot. Leader: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217, or pete_webb@juno.com.

H Harford. Butterflies and Dragonflies of Harford Co. Join Rick Cheicante for this very leisurely half-day foray to one of Harford Co's local butterfly and dragonfly haunts. Butterflies may include showy swallowtails, monarch, and viceroy as well as diminutive hairstreaks and challenging grass skippers. Odonate hopefuls include common green darner, eastern pondhawk, black saddlebags, and halloween pennant. Call Rick Cheicante, 410-803-2712, for details.

Sunday, August 27

PICNIC. Washington. Camp Harding. Bring a lawn chair, your own plate, cup, utensils, and a drink. Also, please bring a dish to share. Starts at 4 PM. Call 301-797-8454 for directions.

Where there's a will . . .

Planned giving offers a flexible way to contribute to the conservation and enjoyment of birds in Maryland. By including the MOS in your will or estate plan, you can shape a legacy that will support the birds of our state into the future. Charitable bequests in your will or revocable living trust carry out your wishes for distributing assets to the organization you have supported during your lifetime. Charitable bequests can also reduce or even eliminate federal estate tax. If you are interested in including the Maryland Ornithological Society in your estate plan, please contact me at 301-455-9509 or linda_s_keenan@yahoo.com.

The legal language for wills and estate plans is:

The Maryland Ornithological Society, a nonprofit corporation, organized and existing under the laws of the State of Maryland, and with principal business address of Cylburn Mansion, 4915 Greenspring Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21290-4698.

—Linda Keenan
Chair, Membership Committee

Miniroute Coordinator **Nancy Martin** is seeking volunteers to conduct 15-stop atlas miniroutes in order to assess the relative abundance of birds in a statewide sample of atlas blocks. If you are confident of your avian voice identification skills and would like to run one of these early-morning routes somewhere in Maryland or D.C., please contact Nancy at 23460 Clarissa Rd, Chestertown, MD 21620 or via e-mail at borealdee@baybroadband.net.

BOOK REVIEWS

Hummingbirds of North America, Sheri Williamson • *Houghton Mifflin Co.* 263 pp. 2001. \$22.00

Hummingbirds of North America: The Photographic Guide, Steve N. G. Howell • *Princeton University Press*. 272 pp. 2003. \$29.95

Beginner's Guide to Hummingbirds, Donald and Lillian Stokes • *Little, Brown & Co.* 144 pp. 2002. \$8.95

Sheri Williamson and her husband Tom Wood run the Southeastern Arizona Bird Observatory in Bisbee and are among this country's elite hummingbird experts. Her "Peterson series" book is the most complete of these three. It covers 31 species, including a few, like Wedge-tailed Sabrewing, that have not yet shown up in the U.S. but theoretically could, as well as all species like Cuban Emerald, and Green-breasted Mango, that have irregularly and unexpectedly appeared north of the border—plus, of course, species like Berylline and White-eared, which turn up in small numbers pretty much every year. Species accounts are detailed and informative and the range maps are large and excellent. Rather than painted plates, Williamson uses photographs; these depict both sexes and juveniles, and close-ups of heads and tails. My only beef is that the photos are too small—often eight to a 4 1/4 by 7 1/2-inch page. Despite this criticism, which is shared by some birders with better eyes than mine, this and the following book are THE definitive current field guides to any hummingbird you may see in North America.

As its title announces, Steve Howell's book is also a photographic guide. These images are much larger than those in Williamson, and there 200 of them, with a dozen or so for most species. They are superb shots that are well chosen to illustrate identification points in the text. This book covers "only" 24 species, all breeders and regular vagrants, so they certainly include every hummer that you might reasonably

expect to see in the United States, even on a very lucky day. No one is a more astute and perspicacious observer of subtleties of shape and plumage than Howell. He writes well, too. Read the text of this book and study the photos; you will learn a lot about how to go about identifying hummingbirds.

Donald and Lillian Stokes are overly modest by calling their book a "Beginner's Guide;" it's a lot more comprehensive and useful than the name implies. Once again, it's a photographic guide. Once again, the photographs are excellent and well chosen to illustrate features that aid in identification. The range maps are small but quite useful nevertheless. The Stokes cover just 16 species, but they include all the species that occur most years in the U.S. except Plain-capped Starthroat. In 2005, my wife and I saw, and confidently identified, these same 16 hummer species in the U.S. using this little book as our primary field guide. The text is a bit spare but omits nothing that would cause you to miss an ID. A neat feature is that pages are tabbed according to the throat color of the male of each species. This is the book to slip into your pocket at a hummingbird feeding area; it's small, light, easy to use, and inexpensive. Of course, if a Green Violet-ear turns up, you had better be ready to reach for Williamson or Howell!

—Michael Bowen
Montgomery Bird Club

POSTMASTER: TIME-DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE EXPEDITE!

LAST CALL

...for Chapter and Committee annual reports. Submit them to MOS President Janet Millenson (janet@twocrows.com) by May 15.

...for Research Proposals. Applications for grants for ornithological research in the state of Maryland are due by June 1. Notification of awards (generally not exceeding \$2,000) will be made in about 8 weeks. For application guidelines and info, contact Gwen Brewer, glbrewer@comcast.net.

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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